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Marcos deal legitimizes plunder, says lawmaker

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 23, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 164 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Whistle when in trouble, police instruct students

Jocelyn R. Uy
Metro

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL? When riding in a jeep or a bus, do not extend your hands out the window, especially if you're wearing jewelry or holding a cell phone.

WHISTLE/ A4

HIV widower finds new life, love in Iloilo

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—IT HAS BEEN EIGHT YEARS BUT Don still keeps the memory.

It was International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day and he lit a candle for his wife. He lit other candles, too, for his friends.

That was on the night of Sunday, the day the

HIV WIDOWER/ A6

Gov't must answer for all killings–CHR

Pattern shows complicity of cops, soldiers

By Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights yesterday said the government must be held accountable for the killings of activists and journalists, whether or not military or police personnel were involved.

Under human rights terms, the government is responsible for ensuring that the right to life, privacy, security of homes and public order of its citizens are respected, CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing told the INQUIRER.

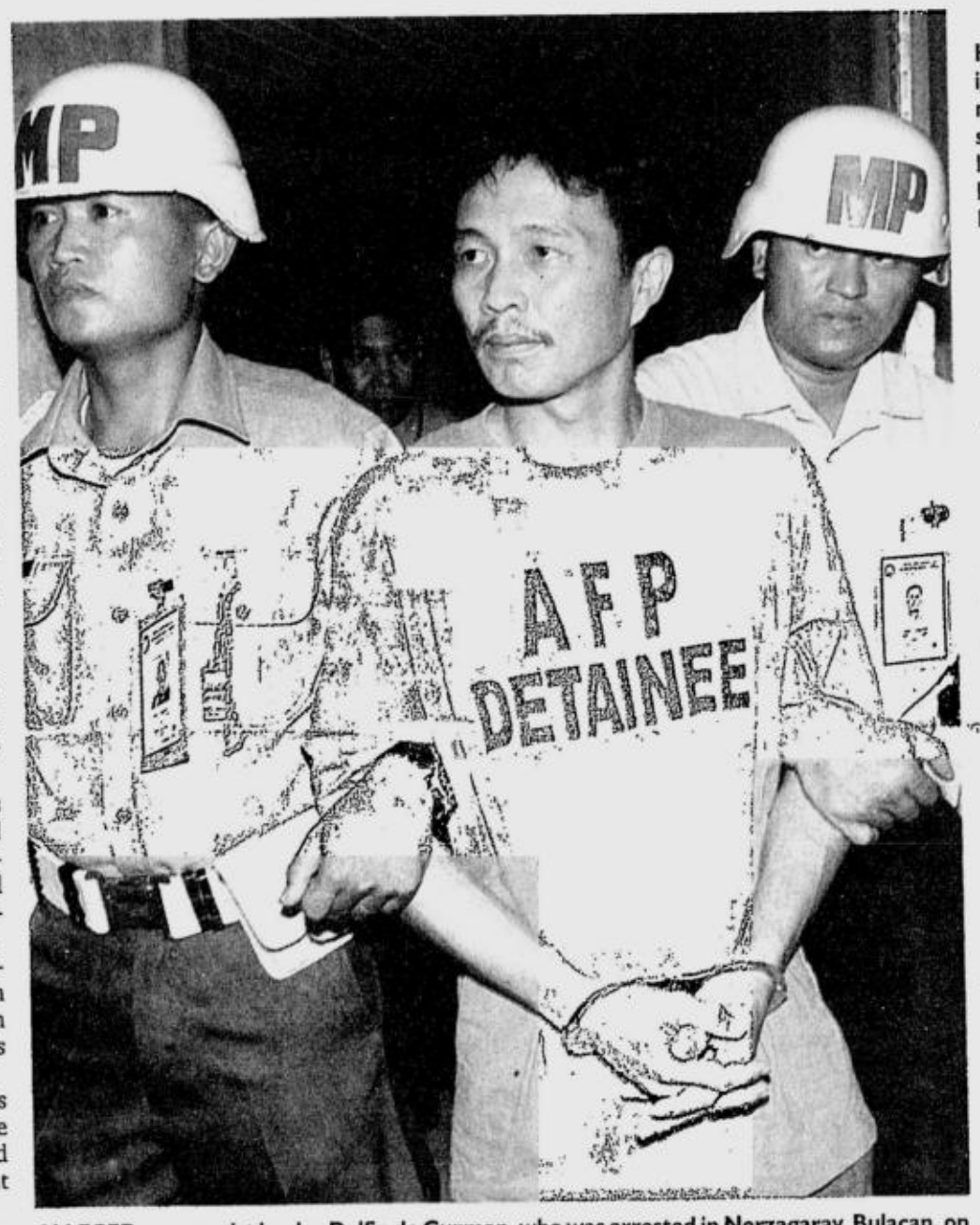
"We strongly condemn the spate of killings that have yet to be resolved and we have noted that there is a perceived pattern of the violation of the human right to life ... If several deaths happened in just a week, this constitutes a pattern of impunity," Quisumbing said.

She said her group had received 143 reports of extrajudicial killings from such cause-oriented groups as Karapatan, Bayan Muna and Anakpawis. The figure covers killings in 2005 up to March 2006.

"The pattern of complaints that come to us show members of the Armed Forces and the PNP as suspects. That has to be addressed and we call on the military to do something about it," Quisumbing said.

Quisumbing's statement comes in the wake

GOV'T MUST/ A4



ALLEGED communist leader Delfin de Guzman, who was arrested in Norzagaray, Bulacan, on May 11, is presented to the media in Camp Aguinaldo. JOAN BONDOC

KILLERS ignored the message on the shirt of their latest victim, local radio hero Fernando Batul. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Former vice mayor 79th media fatality

By Jofelle P. Tesorio, Geraldford Ticke and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Months ago, he bought a T-shirt bearing the slogan "Stop Killing Journalists" from a colleague, not knowing that he would later be counted among the long list of slain media persons.

Fernando "Dong" Batul, 36, a commentator of local radio station dyPR and a former vice mayor of this city, was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle at 6:35 a.m. yesterday on Valencia Street here.

He was driving his multicab on his way to work, which was 50 meters from the site of the ambush, Palawan police Senior Supt. Elpidio de Asis said.

Batul suffered 12 bullet wounds—four in the face, four in the chest, three in the back and one in the side, said Senior Insp. Jane Cordero. Police recovered four slugs from a .45-cal. pistol.

He was the 79th journalist killed in the Philippines since the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

Last week, after a journalist was beaten by a local official and a photographer was murdered, the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists renewed its concern about the safety of media people in the Philippines.

It said that the situation had gone "from bad to worse."

Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) has said in Paris that the Philippines is the most dangerous place for journalists after war-torn Iraq.

FORMER/ A5

Australian gov't defends Lafayette

By Volt Contreras, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Blanche S. Rivera

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY came to the defense of the Lafayette mining group after a fact-finding body urged a stop to its operations, and as Malacañang called for "fairness and reason" in resolving the issue lest the country lose the confidence of investors.

AUSTRALIAN/ A4

Rebel linked to Kintanar, Tabara killings

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A MAN ALLEGED TO BE A RANKING communist party official has confessed to being involved in the assassinations of two former leftist leaders who had struck a peace deal with the government, the military said yesterday.

Of slight build and looking like a simple laborer, Delfin de Guzman wore the orange garb of a detainee and was in handcuffs when Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga presented him to media.

"He confessed that he was behind these assassinations," Senga said.

Senga was referring to the killing of ex-rebel chief Romulo Kintanar inside a Quezon City restaurant in 2003 and to the murder of former rebel leader Arturo Tabara in the parking lot of a Quezon City mall in 2004.

Standing with military escorts, the 38-year-old De Guzman—alleged acting secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) regional party committee in Central Luzon—looked at reporters as Senga enumerated his alleged crimes.

The reporters were not allowed to ask De Guzman questions.

Although the military said De Guzman had been in custody since he was arrested May 11 in his house in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the announcement that he was in government hands was not made until yesterday.

The announcement followed a resurgence in the killing of leftists around the country and government efforts to depict the murders as part of purges within the CPP and the New People's Army, its military arm.

Militants blamed the killings on military agents.

Rep. Teddy Casiño of the Bayan Muna party-list pointed out that, as part of its long-standing policy, the NPA would

REBEL/ A6

Course for 'eco-warriors' to be offered in schools

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE LATE ENVIRONMENTAList Maximo T. Kalaw was the original eco-warrior. He was a voice in the wilderness fighting for the preservation of a rapidly disappearing Philippine wilderness.

Kalaw died in November 2001, but his work and dreams live on as students of more than 20 colleges and universities in the country are transformed into "eco-warriors" through the help of the Maximo T. Kalaw Institute for Sustainable Development (MTKISD).

"Eco-warriors are ordinary men and women who stand up for the environment. They take action and do work to ensure a healthy environment for all," says Baboo Mondoñedo, executive director of the MTKISD. "This is a wonderful birthday present for Junie [whose birthday was on May 21]."

The MTKISD plans to convert the National Service Training Program (the substitute subject for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps) into a course on environmental advocacy.

The institute has trained about 200 NSTP teachers in the country in preparation for the course and has received enthusiastic responses.

Mondoñedo says even some university presidents who had attended their training immediately asked for the program to be adopted in their schools.

The Polytechnic University of the Philippines is one of the schools that will teach the "eco-warriorship" course this year.

"What was once a drudging course has become exciting," Mondoñedo says.

The NSTP is a required course for all college students. Under Republic Act No. 9163 (NSTP Law of 2001), students are required to take two semesters of NSTP, where they render literacy and civic welfare training services.

Mondoñedo says the NSTP is their opportunity to bring in Kalaw's eco-warriorship voice

COURSE/ A6

RYAN LIM

TOP OF THE CORDILLERA
It's not the same as conquering Mt. Everest, but members of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Outdoor Club are just as thrilled upon reaching the summit of Mt. Pulag (2,935 meters) in Benguet, the second highest mountain in the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2006

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon, the eastern sections of Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/22/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Marcos deal legitimizes plunder, says lawmaker

LAGMAN: Amicable settlement an act of concession

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christine O. Avendaño

ANY GOVERNMENT compromise with the family of the late President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies on their ill-gotten wealth cases would "legitimize plunder" and open up a "veritable gold mine" for more graft and corruption by people in authority, a leading member of Congress said yesterday.

House Deputy Majority Leader Edcel Lagman said such a compromise would allow the Marcoses and their associates to openly enjoy the wealth they allegedly stole during Marcos' 20-year rule that ended with the dictator's ouster in 1986.

"An amicable settlement is an act of concession which can never be a fair and just resolution to the country's long and arduous quest to recover Marcos-embezzled funds," Lagman said in a statement.

He issued the statement immediately after Malacañang announced its support for a plan by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to work out deals with the Marcoses and their cronies that would in effect drop criminal charges against them in exchange for part of their allegedly ill-gotten wealth.

"It may be time for us to consider a compromise as a solution to these decades-old cases," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday. "While only prosecution and actual punishment may satisfy some of our people, we must also be realistic and acknowledge that too much time has already passed without yet reaching a solution."

Bunye told reporters, however, that any deal would have to be cleared by the courts.

Reacting to Bunye's announcement, Lagman, who lost a brother during the Marcos dictatorship, said, "Expediency to minimize delay is not a good reason to drape a white flag over a coffin of surrender for our campaign for vindication and justice."

"It adds insult to injury and constitutes a final slap on the victims of human rights atrocities committed by Marcos and his henchmen," he added.

Lagman said that while the PCGG may have jurisdiction to enter into compromises, "the better policy is to desist from (an) amicable settlement which would invariably dilute recovery and may perpetuate impunity."

He noted that the Supreme Court had ruled that part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos and his cronies, particularly the coconut levy funds, were "impressed with public character and considered prima facie public funds."

"After having waited 20 years to fully recover and benefit from the vast amount of money Marcos and his close associates stole from the country's coffers, why should Filipinos settle for less?" Lagman said.

"We have dragged our feet for too long and what is imperative now is to hasten the process and resolve that the full amount plundered during the dictatorship be returned and used for much-needed social services and development projects," he said.

"A compromise will be a contrived deodorant to obscure the government's lackadaisical efforts to completely recover what has been robbed from the people even as it would be a veritable gold mine for corruption and a camouflage for graft," Lagman added.

Some estimates have put the Marcos wealth at at least $10 billion and the assets are believed scattered in banks in the United States, Switzerland and Liechtenstein under names of dummy foundations.

Imelda Marcos still faces numerous graft cases, but neither she nor the Marcos couple's cronies who benefited during the dictatorship have been jailed.

Bunye said that discussions on the possible compromise were ongoing and said that anything beyond that statement would be "speculative at this point."

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor told reporters that a compromise would be "in the best interest of the country."

Defensor said he did not believe President Macapagal-Arroyo had taken any position on the proposal "because the President will be the last of all in the decision-making process."

"Let's leave it at that. Lets see what the PCGG will come up with," he said.

Meanwhile, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede suggested yesterday that Pulse Asia or Social Weather Stations undertake a survey to determine how Filipinos feel about a compromise with the Marcoses and their associates.

He proposed that only one question be asked: "Are you in favor of PCGG efforts to settle with the Marcoses and their cronies?"

"I am very confident that most of them will say yes," he added.

Abcede declined to reveal details of the proposed deals with the Marcoses and Eduardo Cojuangco, who allegedly used the coconut levy to set up a monopoly over the coconut industry and take controlling interests in the United Coconut Planters Bank and San Miguel Corporation.

Details of deals with the Marcoses and Cojuangco will be revealed in due time, he said. *With reports from Alcuin Papa and AFP*

PCGG COMMISSIONER Ricardo Abcede (standing center) celebrated his birthday last week with no less than former First Lady Imelda Marcos (seated center) as his special guest. "What's wrong with that?" Abcede had reportedly said when it was pointed out that he was hobnobbing with someone whose alleged stolen wealth he was supposed to recover for the nation. TV GRAB FROM ABC CHANNEL 5

It's duty of the Church to speak out on issues, says new papal nuncio

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE NEW PAPAL NUNCIO TO THE Philippines is not about to discourage Filipino Catholic bishops from taking a stand on issues that concern the people.

For Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni, it is the duty of the Church to speak out on issues.

"Yes, of course, this is our duty," he said in response to a question on whether or not he thought Filipino bishops who were outspoken on issues like mining and Charter change should continue to be so.

"Jesus became a man and in becoming a man he assumed a body, taking care not only of souls but also of the bodies. And miracles were done, not only healing the spiritual needs of the people, but also looking after the poor. So this is an essential part of the Church; the Church without this aspect is half of the Church," the 59-year-old archbishop said.

"So it is also my duty to encourage the bishops, to help them, assist them in all these social aspects which concern the Filipino people, especially the poor," he added.

Filoni spoke to reporters after he had lunch with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang following his presentation of credentials to her in a simple ceremony yesterday.

The nuncio, whose prior assignment was in strife-torn Iraq, was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to replace Archbishop Antonio Franco, who in turn was posted to the Middle East.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales accompanied Filoni to Malacañang.

The papal envoy said he was pleased to be in the country.

"I will now be able to enjoy [being] among the Filipino people, to appreciate their mind, soul, tradition, culture, beauty everywhere, so many islands, but also the beauty of the people here," he said.

He also said he was "touched (by President Arroyo's) sensitiveness."

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the President and Filoni talked about his postings in Iraq and, earlier, China.

"He (Filoni) mentioned that (while) most governments pushed for birth control, divorce, the death penalty... in the Philippines these three were in consonance with Catholic teachings," Defensor said.

Asked if he and the President talked about the Filipino bishops' stand against mining, Filoni said they did not delve into the subject.

And what did he think of the local bishops' opposition to amending the Constitution at this time to change the form of government?

He replied that he knew that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines had given a statement on this.

"I respect their opinion, which is quite wise also," Filoni said.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO meets with Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, (left) the new Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Fernando Filoni, and CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo at the Rizal Hall in Malacañang Monday. LYN RILLON

Bishop pours out frustration over 'jueteng' in book

By Christian V. Esguerra

WITH THE RESURGENCE OF "jueteng" in many parts of the country, it might do well for the public to get hold of the book gambling foe Archbishop Oscar Cruz wrote last year to pour out his frustrations over the pervasive underground lottery.

"Gambling in the Republic" was quietly released late last year during the time Cruz and his antigambling group, Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, were complaining that the illegal numbers game was slowly making a comeback.

Earlier, in May 2005, the Lingayen-Dagupan prelate revived the jueteng controversy by announcing that the game had become even more prevalent under the Arroyo administration.

Several Senate investigations followed, all revealing the extent of jueteng's influence in the Philippine National Police and the national and local governments.

"I have no regrets," Cruz told the INQUIRER in a phone interview on Sunday, referring to his role in the Senate investigations that led nowhere.

"I'm just intrigued by the inaction and tolerance of the administration and there could be multimillion reasons for this attitude," he said.

With no less than PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao confirming last week that jueteng was back, Cruz said he was hoping his book would keep the fire of his advocacy going.

The 215-page book explores the Filipino in a "culture of gambling."

Cruz does not buy the idea that Filipinos are at the mercy of gambling, which is "as old as humanity."

"The more a falsehood approaches truth, the more dangerous it becomes," he wrote in the book, referring to the many rationalizations for gambling.

While jueteng in particular is difficult to eradicate considering its huge network, he said another problem occurs when "citizens see nothing, hear nothing, say nothing and do nothing as well."

This is further bolstered by some members of the media who back gambling, both legal and illegal, he said, citing the case of the state-run Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

"It is not a secret that there are certain columnists and commentators who are consistently pro-Pagcor in their writings and remarks," he wrote.

"It is possible that they are really convinced of the righteousness of Pagcor, truly persuaded by its social merits, developmental objectives and national relevance.

"But considering that these few columnists and commentators are predictably the same [people], it is also possible that Pagcor is the motor behind their consistent protective and continuously 'praise' position in favor of the said government corporate gambling arm."

Abenojar's wife insists hubby first on Everest

By Alcuin Papa

MAVERICK MOUNTAINEER DALE ABENOjar is still gathering the evidence that would prove he was the first Filipino to summit Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world at 29,035 feet.

"We are gathering evidence and we will present it to you soon," said Abenojar's wife Liza in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

Liza said her husband was "in transit to Katmandu, Nepal," and was expected to arrive there yesterday.

She, however, declined to give any details of her husband's feat, saying she "did not want to fan the controversy."

Last Friday, Liza Abenojar issued a statement claiming that her husband had "successfully" reached the summit of Mt. Everest via its North face in Tibet on May 15, two days before Leo Oracion of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE) summited Everest, becoming the first Filipino known to have conquered the mountain.

Oracion climbed Everest on its South side in Nepal. He was followed to the summit the next day, May 18, by his colleague in the FPMEE, Erwin "Pastor" Emata. On May 19, Romi Garduce, a solo climber, became the third Filipino known to have made it to "the roof of the world."

Liza Abenojar said her husband "returned to the base camp around 9 p.m. Tibet time on May 18 ... Dale Abenojar was one of the four Filipino climbers on Mt. Everest. But unlike the others, he climbed independently and without any sponsors or networks backing him up. He left last April 1 with his meager resources."

Oracion and Emata were backed by the ABS-CBN television network while Garduce was supported by GMA 7. They also had other corporate and individual sponsors, like taipan Lucio Tan for the FPMEE mountaineers.

According to the website mounteverest.net, "details are sketchy" on Abenojar's feat "and a complete report and proof is expected from the climber within the week."

Another website, everestnews.com, said Abenojar was headed for Katmandu with a witness, Tsiring Sherpa, and a summit picture. The website also said the truth about Abenojar's claim would be known "in a few days."

"Climbing Everest has been Dale's lifelong dream. He was the first Filipino to publicly announce his intent to climb it way back in 1994. But it's not that important at this point who was the first on Mt. Everest as all four Filipino summiteers are equally deserving of honor and admiration. It showcases the Filipinos' will, skill and determination to achieve great heights in the field of alpine mountaineering. All four of them dreamed and pursued it—and each has his own genuine spirit and inspiring character," Liza Abenojar said.

5 pro-Erap leaders abducted

By DJ Yap

FIVE LEADERS OF A MILITANT ORGAnization closely associated with deposed President Joseph Estrada were abducted by heavily armed men for still unknown reasons in Quezon City yesterday.

Officials of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice were meeting inside its national chair Ver Eustaquio's house at 40 K-4 between T. Gener and Judge Jimenez Streets in Kamuning at 3:30 p.m. when the men barged into the compound.

Linggoy Alcuaz, a former campaigner of Estrada's buddy, the late actor and presidential contender Fernando Poe Jr., identified those abducted as Eustaquio, Jim Cabauatan, Ruben Dionisio, Jose Curameng and Dennis Ebona.

According to Eustaquio's wife Myriam, without identifying themselves, the armed men began rounding up the UMDJ leaders, slapping, punching and kicking them.

"This is political harassment," the distraught Myriam said, but she added that it was too early to accuse the government, or the police and military, of having a hand in the abduction.

One by one, the UMDJ leaders were asked to lie on their bellies, with long firearms trained at them, and were punched or kicked when they tried to resist, Myriam said.

"They were treated like criminals. There was no arrest warrant, and nobody even bothered to introduce himself. The only time they talked was when they asked the leaders to lie down," she said.

The UMDJ leaders were then taken, one after the other, to the suspects' waiting vehicles parked outside, taking about 30 minutes, she added.

Neighbors took note of the suspects' vehicles, a cream Nissan sedan, with plate numbers WPJ-661, a green van, with plate numbers 479 (the letters were hidden from view), and a Toyota Corolla, with plate numbers WPX-587, Alcuaz said.

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SUBIC RAPE TRIAL

3 times a week starting next Friday to beat deadline

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN ORDER TO MEET THE JUDGE'S SELF-IMposed deadline, the trial of four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman last year will be held three times a week starting next Friday, June 2. At least one witness will be presented in court during the hearings.

Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 139 Judge Benjamin Pozon set marathon hearings on the Subic rape case during a preliminary conference yesterday, saying he would like to finish by August the trial of Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier, Lance Cpls. Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantis and Daniel Smith.

A Filipino woman had accused the servicemen of conspiring to rape her on board a cruising van inside the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 last year.

"This June, we will hold the hearings three times a week, but if we have not presented enough number of witnesses by the end of June, we will have to [hold hearings] five times a week," Pozon said during a consultation with prosecution and defense lawyers yesterday.

The hearings would be held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the more spacious session hall at the old Makati City Hall building. It is the same hall borrowed by the Makati RTC for hearings on the coup d' etat case against junior military officers tagged as leaders of the July 27, 2003 takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel in Makati City.

"We'll do our best to finish this ... There should be one witness a day, and you should be ready with at least two witnesses so in case the other one is absent, the other one could be presented," Pozon told lawyers during the proceedings.

Media cameras and recorders would not be allowed inside the courtroom, but with the concurrence of both camps, Pozon allowed reporters to cover the hearings bringing only pen and paper.

"The marathon hearings, while ideal, can also prejudice the prosecution because we have very little time to prepare. This [schedule] might just affect our case because of the extreme pressure on us to speed up the process," prosecutor Evalyn Ursua told reporters.

Lawyer Jose Justiniano, counsel for Silkwood, meanwhile had no problem with the schedule.

"That's just reasonable, considering the number of witnesses they have ... Of course our clients have a right to a speedy trial that's why we want this to be finished," he said.

Pozon required prosecution and defense lawyers to present in court on Friday's pretrial hearing the order of witnesses, for both camps to be wary of which witness to watch out for every hearing day. This would prevent lawyers from seeking postponements in the event the adverse panel presented surprise witnesses.

Former Sen. Rene Saguisag, meanwhile, has asked Pozon to cite Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for contempt because of statements he made allegedly showing his favor for the US Marines.

Saguisag, who is one of the complainant's private counsels, filed a motion on May 12, asking Pozon to order Gonzalez to stop meddling with the rape case as this was "a clear conflict of interest, in order to protect the rights and interests of the people and private complainant and to prevent the miscarriage of justice."

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Gov't must answer for all killings, says CHR

From page A1

of Karapatan's review of all activist slayings since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001. Karapatan's review of its records showed 601, not 566, killings.

"Not everybody is to be blamed but if a commander has killings in his area happening, even if he's not really involved, it is his responsibility. The killings should stop," she said.

NPA also suspect

Leftist groups had pointed to Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan as the main tormentor of activists. Karapatan and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) had noted that the killings of activists increased wherever Palparan was assigned.

Quisumbing said the commission had also received information that in some cases, the communist New People's Army was the suspect.

"We couldn't care less what colors the killers are. Is the government so helpless?" Quisumbing said, referring to the continued killings and the slow paced identification of those behind them.

"In human rights terms, the government is still responsible even if persons in authority are not those behind the killings. The government is still responsible in protecting the right to life and the security of homes and public order and property," the chair said.

Quisumbing said the CHR will conduct hearings to further gather information on the killings and the involvement of either persons in authority or other armed groups.

"This is a good time for the government to make good its pledge to the United Nations when the Philippines ran for a seat in the newly formed United Nations Human Rights Council," she said.

Quisumbing said the CHR would release its findings on whether the government had made good on its promises.

Pattern of abuse

"There is an emerging pattern of gross violation of human rights and a failure of the justice system," she said.

"We are not condemning the government. Not yet. But one wonders why these killings are not being acted upon," she added.

Quisumbing said the commission appreciated President Macapagal-Arroyo's order for an investigation and the Department of the Interior and Local Government's efforts to find the killers.

Karapatan, however, remained unimpressed. It said it would not cooperate with the DILG-PNP's Task Force Usig. This followed the PNP probe team's statement that it had yet to see a pattern of military involvement and security officials' claims that the slayings were part of a purge of communist ranks.

"We are not only skeptical about Task Force Usig's formation, but we also doubt that it can thoroughly investigate the cases," Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez said.

Witch-hunt

Karapatan said the probe had turned into a "witch-hunt and a forum for the red-scare hysteria" by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

From his exile in Utrecht in the Netherlands, Jose Ma. Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said the line that a communist purge was behind the killings was meant to justify more deaths and to vilify the communist movement.

"While there is method in its madness, the Arroyo regime itself is overwhelmingly more mad than methodical and is unwittingly generating political turmoil, contrary to its boasts of being able to pacify and govern the country," said Sison, chief political consultant of the CPP-led National Democratic Front.

"Blinded by hubris, the regime overestimates its ability to keep itself in power through sheer violence and deception. It is, in fact, driving the broad masses of the people and various political forces to unite and engage in all forms of struggle," he said.

Australian gov't defends Lafayette mining project

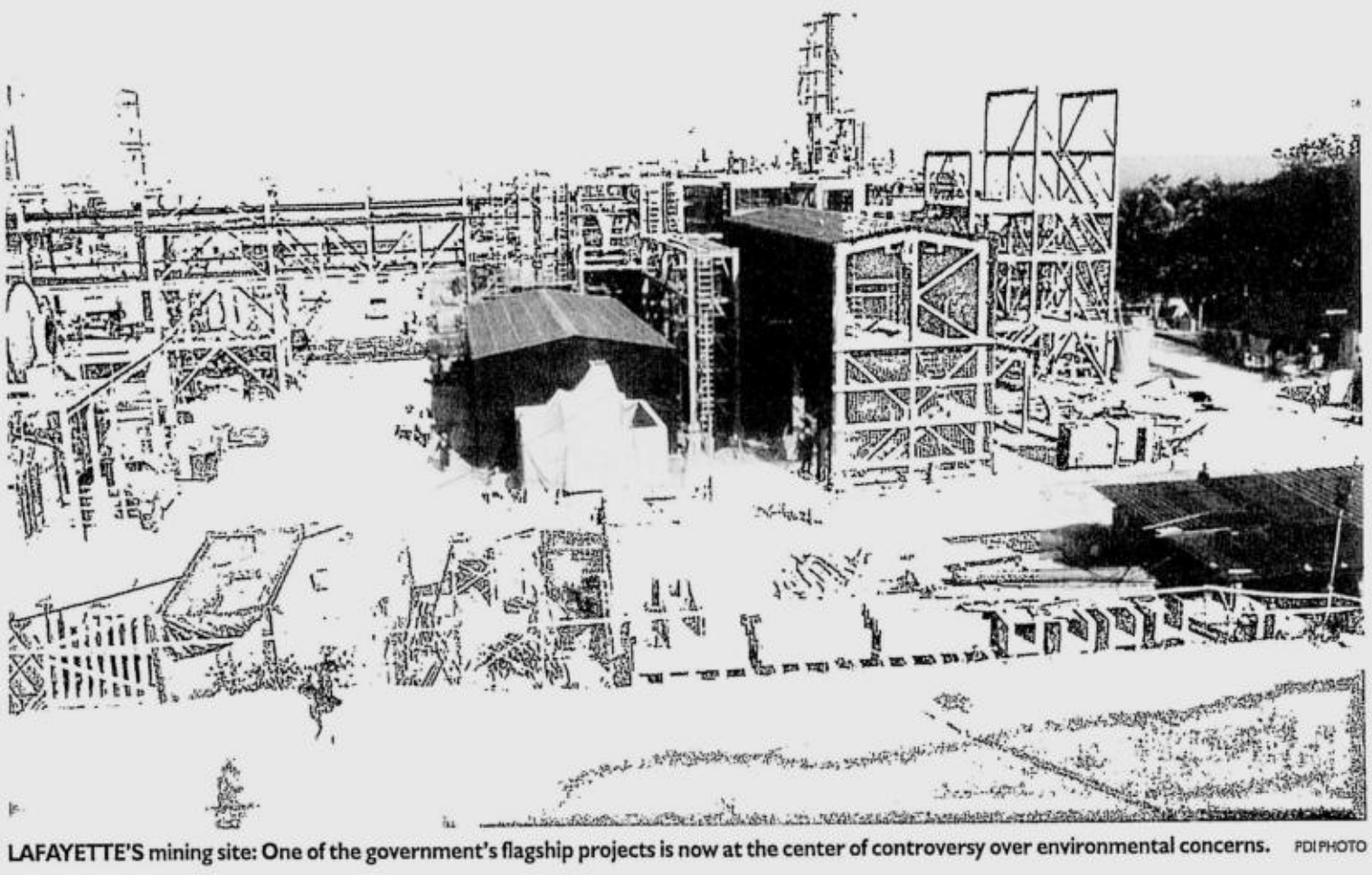
From page A1

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye referred to the waste discharges incident on Rapu-Rapu Island involving the Australian firm Lafayette Philippines Inc. as a mere "operational flaw" that could be corrected through mitigating measures.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes was to fly to Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay today to "validate" the findings of the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission.

The Church-led commission recommended the cancellation of the environmental compliance certificate issued to Lafayette but the company disputed the body's findings as unscientific.

"A blanket ban on mining in Rapu-Rapu and other operations throughout the Philippines would deprive the country of thousands of jobs, significant economic growth, enormous local community development, large tax revenues and international investor confidence," the Australian Embassy said.



LAFAYETTE'S mining site: One of the government's flagship projects is now at the center of controversy over environmental concerns. PDI PHOTO

Requirements met

Australian Ambassador Tony Hely, in a statement, said: "I am advised that the Lafayette mining company has met all compliance requirements mandated by the Philippine government in the aftermath of the incidents last October.

"I strongly encourage the Philippine government to now allow Lafayette to commence testing operations as soon as possible so that all stakeholders can judge, on an objective and scientific basis, whether the Rapu-Rapu mining operation is now in a position to meet the government's appropriately high standards and safeguards."

Lafayette has asked the government to allow a test run of its gold-processing facility on Rapu-Rapu to show that it had put in place the remedial measures required before it would be allowed to resume operations.

Ensure safety

"The key in Rapu-Rapu, as elsewhere, is to ensure that mining operations are safe, transparent, accountable and responsible," Hely said.

But in a new threat to the mining sector, the communist New People's Army yesterday vowed to step up attacks on mining firms and troops guarding them in the northern Kalinga mountains, Reuters reported.

"The unhampered mining activities in Kalinga will destroy the environment and deprive the indigenous people of their resources through deception," an NPA statement said.

Among the targets the NPA vowed to hit were mines run by Cordillera Exploration Inc., Wolfland Resources Inc. and Makikala Mining Co. Inc.

The fact-finding commission, headed by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, also called for a review of the Mining Act, especially its provisions on ownership of mining companies and operations.

Benefits from mining

"We respect the views of the good bishop and we share his concerns over the environment," Bunye told reporters. "However, we must deal with investors with fairness and reason lest we lose the confidence of a sector."

He said projects in the mining sector "bring in good-paying jobs for our people and the development of our communities."

"All in all, the record of mining investments in the Philippines has been constructive and mutually rewarding," he said.

Bunye said that if there were any "operational flaws" to be rectified and wrongs to be set right, "then by all means the government shall enforce the law to protect the public interest."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had obtained the assurance of the DENR that it would act on any operational flaws immediately to avoid a repeat of previous incidents.

Final say

"This will be decided at the department level," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

Reyes, who will have the final say on whether to let Lafayette resume gold-processing operations after five months of suspension, said he had studied the Bastes commission's report over the weekend.

"We acknowledge the painstaking effort of the commission ... They gave excellent and insightful observations but we must continue to validate the report," Reyes said.

He said he would try to get inputs from the management of Lafayette, the local government of Rapu-Rapu, fisherfolk and even businessmen to "come up with the right position on the company."

Not matter of compromise

"This is not a matter of compromise but of determining what's best for the country and the greater majority. There are certain issues that cannot be compromised," Reyes said.

"We will allow only responsible mining, and at the same time, we must also recognize the fact that natural resources must be developed for our people," he said.

Militant groups have accused Malacañang of forming the Bastes-led commission just to appease the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, which issued a pastoral statement early this year seeking a stop to large-scale mining by foreign firms.

Congress hearing

The House of Representatives committee on environment and natural resources will resume this month its congressional probe into the Lafayette mine tailings spills.

Party-list Representatives Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis and Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero had sought the resumption of the inquiry.

Several proadministration lawmakers warned a total ban on mining would deprive the country of much-needed economic opportunities.

Bastes report crucial

Mariano told reporters the Bastes commission's findings could provide the committee with crucial empirical data on which it could base its "decisive legislative moves."

"The Bastes commission's report is very crucial to the committee investigation," he said.

"Ms Arroyo's outright denial of the Bastes commission's recommendations is a Malacañang promo to transnational mining corporations in its total sell-out and plunder of the country's national patrimony," the militant lawmaker said.

Escudero said that if Lafayette was the Arroyo administration's "show window" of the reinvigorated mining operations in the country, then it failed because it gave the country a "bad image."

Luring investors

Reacting to statements by some Malacañang officials that the fact-finding commission had exceeded its mandate, Hontiveros said: "How can a recommendation to review the Mining Act be an abuse of discretion when Speaker Jose de Venecia himself committed the House to integrate the recommendations of the panel [in a review] of the Mining Act?"

Rep. Eduardo Veloso of Leyte and Rep. Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City said that with mining, the country would be able to further attract investors.

Veloso said technocrats had projected that the mining industry could infuse P17 billion to P23 billion in revenues and generate about 240,000 jobs in six years.

Too good to miss

"We cannot let this opportunity pass," he said.

Domogan said the country's aim to achieve rapid progress did not mean that economic opportunities or the environment would be sacrificed.

"Good policy direction and laws will set the balance which will result in benefits (for the people)," he said.

He stressed that the mining industry offered numerous benefits to the country and the people.

"But mining firms must strictly comply with our laws to protect our people and environment. This is what the Palace means when it declared that social justice can go hand in hand with economic growth," he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Whistle when in trouble, police instruct students

From page A1

Shopping for school supplies? Don't forget to add an anti-rape whistle to the list.

Planning to skip class and hang out in the mall? Do not talk or argue with strangers.

You'd never find these tips in Robert Fulghum's "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," but if you're a student, these reminders could save your cell phone, perhaps even your life.

Manual

The National Capital Region Police Office has put together a manual to ensure that students do not fall victim to robbers, kidnappers, rapists or car thieves when classes resume next month, according to Senior Supt. Agrimero Cruz Jr., chief of the NCRPO community relations division.

The NCRPO has reproduced more than 1,000 copies of the primer, Cruz told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"We are requesting school officials to post the tips on bulletin boards to serve as reminders to students," he said.

ELEMENTARY school students choose their notebooks at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City three weeks before the start of classes. Police authorities have issued security guidelines for students in time for the school opening. RUDY ESPERAS

The NCRPO manual, which is chock-full of practical tips, was handed out to school administrators, parent-teacher associations and student organizations across the metropolis as part of "Oplan Balik Paaralan."

Cruz discussed some of the tips in the primer.

Whistle

Female students should carry a whistle or an "alarming device" that could be used to attract attention in times of danger. An alarming device, he said, would be helpful in situations like rape and molestation or cell phone-, bag- or jewelry-snatching.

Female students should not ride on near-empty jeepneys and buses, especially at night. "Do not hitch a ride with a person not familiar to you, even if that person has good intentions," according to the NCRPO manual.

The police also reminded students commuting to and from school to keep their hands and arms at their sides at all times while on a vehicle.

"When in a bus or jeepney, do not extend your arms out the window. Your watch or jewelry could be snatched," the police said, quoting from the manual.

Mall measures

To prevent any untoward incidents in commercial areas, the police advised students to stay inside the malls: "As much as possible, do not hang out on sidewalks to prevent being victimized by snatchers and hawkers."

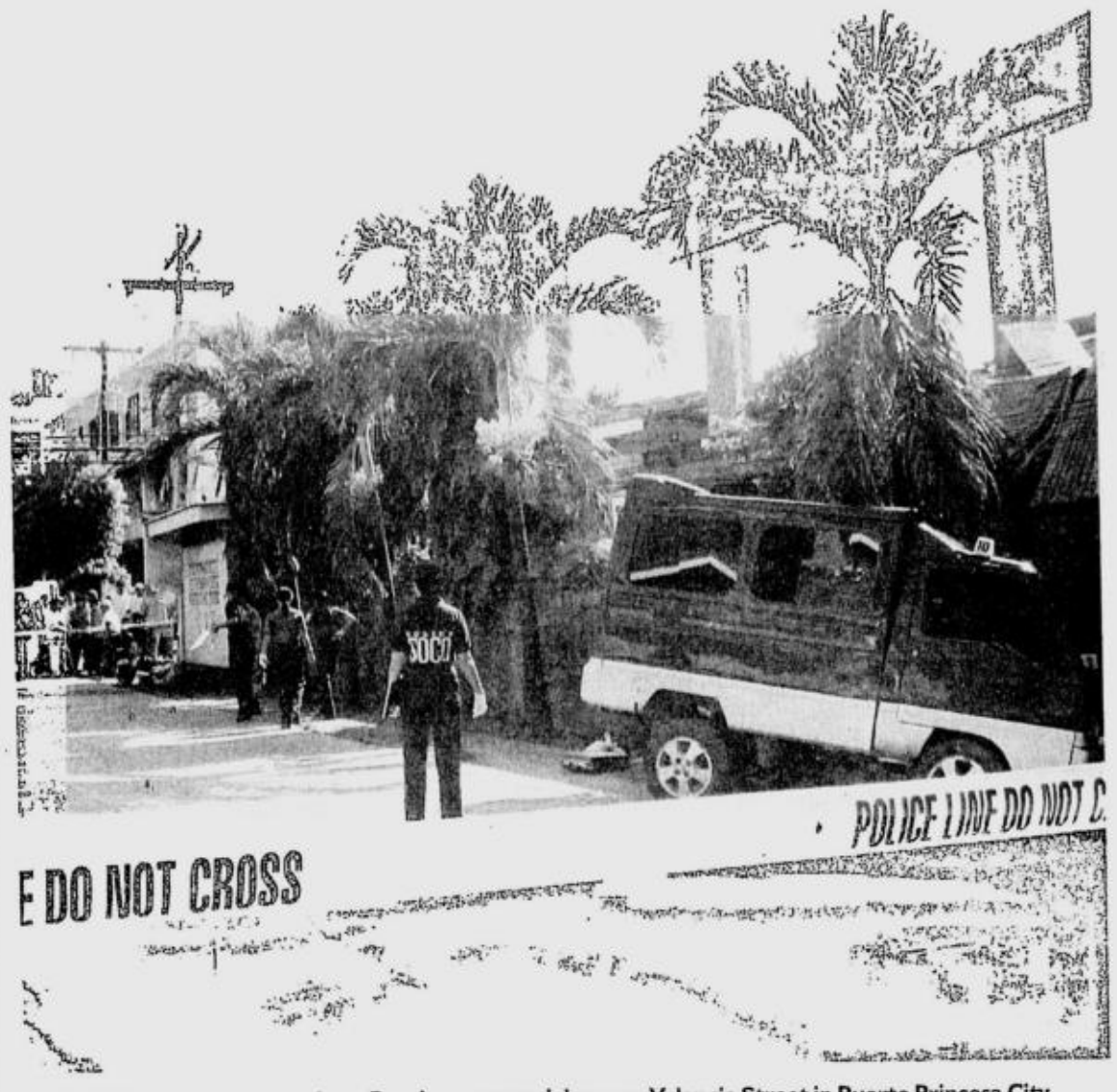
Never talk or argue with strangers, the police stressed. "Never bargain with them. Just ignore and leave them."

Students were also encouraged to jot down plate numbers of suspicious-looking cars, and if they owned cell phones with cameras, to take pictures of dubious-looking persons lurking near automated teller machines (ATMs) and other places.

"Immediately report to the police or security guards these suspicious-looking characters," according to the manual.

Cruz said the NCRPO would be deploying 6,000 policemen to ensure a peaceful and orderly opening of classes in more than 500 schools in Metro Manila next month.

THE SISTERS of hard-hitting radio commentator Fernando Batul cry over the body of their brother.
JOFELLE P TESORIO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU



LAWMEN secure the area where Batul was gunned down on Valencia Street in Puerto Princesa City.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Former vice mayor 79th media fatality

From page A1

Batul, who earned the moniker "Bastonero ng Bayan," was on his way to host his program "Bastonero" at the dyPR station owned by Palawan Broadcasting Corp. when he was attacked.

A witness reported that the gunmen, on a blue Honda XRM motorcycle, were wearing dark helmets, De Asis said.

Batul had been receiving death threats. A month ago, two grenades were thrown at his house but did not explode. The attacker left a note saying "it kills to be too talkative."

Reward

Chief Police Supt. Delfin Genio immediately created a multi-agency task force to look into the killing and appointed De Asis to head it.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn gave the police 48 hours to solve the case. He also put up a P500,000 reward for the arrest of the suspects.

Asked if the killing was related to Batul's work as a broadcaster, Genio said: "Most probably. But we are looking deeply into this case."

He noted that two weeks before grenades were tossed at his house, Batul interviewed a certain Ka Marlon, said to be a leader of the New People's Army in Palawan.

Hagedorn, who had many quarrels with Batul in the past, told dyPR that he was saddened by the death of the commentator.

"I have always sought the protection of Dong Batul ever since because if something happened to him, I would really be the one to blame, and it would not be good for the image of Puerto Princesa," the mayor said.

Local hero

"I would never ever do that. It's not my line," he said.

The family of Batul rushed to the Cooperative Hospital where the journalist was taken. Supporters, fans and friends likewise went there to see their "local radio hero" for the last time.

Another fan said Batul had helped raise money through his program to defray the hospitalization expenses of her sick husband.

Many listeners said Batul had a genuine heart for the poor and had given them hope.

Batul started his radio stint at dyPR when he was studying at Palawan State College.

He became the information officer of the Crocodile Farming Institute and had a hard-hitting program "Kulog at Kidlat" in 1997 over GMA-Super Radyo.

When he became immensely popular, he ran for vice mayor of this city in 2001 and won but he was removed from office in 2003 after an electoral protest was filed by now Vice Mayor Lucilo Bayron.

Batul again ran for vice mayor in 2004 but lost to Bayron.

His program got the highest rating in the latest Kapisanan ng mg Brodkaster ng Pilipinas-Radio Research Council survey. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, AP, AFP and PDI Research*

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HIV widower finds new life, love in Iloilo

From page A1

world honored the memory of those who died of AIDS.

Don, 59, lost his wife to AIDS in 1998. That same year, an HIV antibody test he took showed that he, too, had the virus that caused the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

Don is now in the Philippine registry of some 2,400 people with HIV. The list grows each month.

The registry contains only 20 percent of the names of persons living with HIV/AIDS—referred to as PLWHAs, for short. Experts say there could be as many as 11,000 people who either do not know they have the virus or refuse to say publicly that they have it.

One of the first in Western Visayas to come out in the open, Don is convincing others to follow his example.

"We should not be afraid because there is much openness these days, unlike before. Help is also available from the government and nongovernment organizations," he said.

Outcast, even when dead

Fearing he might end up an outcast, it took Don five years to publicly disclose his condition. He was also afraid of the media then.

It is not easy to leave the shadows.

A hospital here requires HIV-positive patients to take home their used linens.

One family kept a separate set of tableware for an ailing member until they were told that HIV could not be transmitted by saliva.

In one town, parents refused to hold a wake for their son in their own house.

One PLWHA recalled an interview with a reporter who asked: "How come you have AIDS when you're pretty?"

There is no known cure for AIDS, which is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus can be spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.

Fighting the virus

It can be transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse with an HIV-positive partner, blood transfusion, tissue or organ transplants, use of contaminated needles, syringes and skin piercing equipment, and mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, birth or breast-feeding.

HIV weakens the body's immune system until it can no longer fight infection.

An antiretroviral (ARV) therapy is a drug regimen that slows the virus' replication in the body. Don has been on ARV since 2003.

Infected by needle

Don's wife died a few days before Christmas in 1998. She was a nurse in the United States in 1990 when she was accidentally pierced by an infected needle held by a colleague while they were tending to an HIV-positive patient.

DON (left with back to camera) shares his story with Iloilo reporters during a workshop on HIV/AIDS reporting organized by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines. MA. DIOSA LABISTE/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

She came back to the Philippines in 1992, hoping to bring the whole family to the United States as immigrants. They were all set to go but a final requirement called for Don and his wife to get medical checkups.

The results showed she was HIV-positive.

Daughter finds out truth

Their plans to migrate dashed, Don's wife stayed to work in Manila while Don returned to Iloilo. They did not tell their children why the family was denied US visas.

Six years later, one of their five children, a nursing student, read the diagnosis of her sick mother.

Don's wife tried to appeal her case to be allowed to return to the United States to demand damages and compensation from her workplace, but to no avail. This made her bitter at times, Don said.

When she died, Don's in-laws asked him to stay with them in Manila and tend a retail store.

"They thought I would die soon afterward. But that is not the life I wanted to have. I want to tell people about HIV/AIDS and how this can be prevented," he said.

Giving help

Back in Iloilo, Don set up a business producing the lighted boxes used to view X-ray films. His clients included hospitals and physicians who, on learning he had the virus, made sure he was paid promptly for the equipment.

He formed an informal network of people with HIV and AIDS, many of them seafarers. He visited them, spoke to their families, and gave them information on the nature of HIV and AIDS.

Department of Health nurse Charity Perea said that through Don, health officials came to know six PLWHAs who needed help. Families of other sufferers sought his advice.

"He really pushed for the organization of self-help groups for PLWHAs," said Perea.

Don is no longer active with the local organization of PLWHAs, but he still visits some of them and comforts the families of those who had died.

An inner peace

Now he is at peace with himself. When the illness struck him and his wife, he lost his faith in God. He now goes to church regularly.

In 2000, his advocacy earned him a trip to Australia, where he learned more about how to work with communities to educate them on HIV/AIDS.

And he has befriended the media.

Don's story had another twist. He met a woman, also HIV-positive, who became his sweetheart. Like Don, she is also a counselor and active in HIV/AIDS programs.

They plan to live and spend the rest of their lives together.

Rebel leader linked to Kintanar, Tabara killings

From page A1

publicly acknowledge its responsibility if its fighters were involved in the attacks.

At least 220 militants have been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, according to an INQUIRER tally based on its own reports and on reports of Bayan Muna and the Karapatan human rights group.

Kintanar, a former NPA chief, and Tabara, former leader of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB), broke ties with the CPP in 1992.

The NPA claimed responsibility for their deaths.

Senga's secrets

De Guzman had a standing arrest warrant for murder, according to authorities.

Senga was joined by Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr. of the Philippine National Police when De Guzman was presented to the press in Camp Aguinaldo.

Senga refused to elaborate on De Guzman's alleged role in the killing of Kintanar and Tabara.

"There are other things we learned from his testimony but we should keep them in the meantime so as not to jeopardize follow-up operations," he said.

Anti-GMA plot

Senga refused to link De Guzman's arrest to the military's claim that communist gunmen were behind the recent murders of leftist activists in the administration of Ms Arroyo.

"This (De Guzman's arrest) has nothing do with the issue. He was arrested because he was wanted and there is a warrant," Senga said.

Neither would he link De Guzman to the supposed assassination plot against Ms Arroyo involving rebels that National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales spoke of last week.

Senga said a .45-cal. pistol, ammunition and rebel documents were seized from De Guzman.

No charges

The Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) said De Guzman was the triggerman in Tabara's murder and a "backup" gunman when Kintanar was shot.

The Isafp would not identify the other assailants.

The AFP Public Information Office denied that the military also had in its custody Philip Limjoco, alleged head of the NPA special operations group.

Nearly two weeks after his arrest, De Guzman has not been formally charged with Tabara's and Kintanar's murders. He is detained in Camp Aguinaldo based on the warrant issued by a Bulacan judge, officials said.

The military also implicated De Guzman in the killings of former NPA rebels, two Bulacan policemen and a certain Pastor Willy and his wife; the burning of a cement factory in Norzagaray in 2004; extortion from local businessmen; and attacks on military detachments and telecommunications towers in Bulacan.

Where is Limjoco?

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal last week demanded that the AFP immediately release Limjoco, who has been reported missing for more than a week.

According to Rosal, the NPA had received reports that Limjoco was being held by Isafp.

Limjoco was one of about 50 people charged with rebellion in connection with an alleged attempt by rightist and communist forces to topple the Arroyo administration. *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

CPP purges closed book, says Satur

BAYAN MUNA PARTY-LIST REPresentatives Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño yesterday challenged the accuracy of a military report on mass graves in Bukidnon supposedly containing the remains of murdered communist rebels and sympathizers.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales had blamed the "atrocities" on the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Ocampo said that the bloody purges authorized by the party and carried out by the New People's Army in the 1970s and 1980s were a closed book.

"Gonzales's claim ... is without any factual basis. The only bases Gonzales could offer are unconfirmed, unverified and perjured information from the AFP ... and his self-serving anticommunist bias," Ocampo said.

"Bayan Muna rejects Gonzales's claim altogether. It starts with the mischievous assumption that Bayan Muna is a CPP front and thus our members are prime targets of a CPP purge."

Casiño said the purges had long been admitted by the CPP leadership.

"It had been considered a major error on their part. I doubt if they will be making the same mistake because any right thinking movement which already condemned those atrocities would not do them all over again," he said. *Michael Lim Ubac*

Course for 'eco-warriors' ...

From page A1

through the Integral Citizenship Building Program (ICBP).

"When teachers impart to students the concept of human and ecological security and arm them with the knowledge and skills to work for a better world, they are investing in the future," she adds.

Mondoñedo says they have developed a program that includes sessions on exploring Philippine biodiversity and why it has to be conserved.

Among the issues that are tackled in the course are Marinduque Copper Mining (Marcopper) tailings spills in Marinduque, the vanishing dugongs, high-yielding rice varieties and eco-warriorship.

Other eco-warriors

Kalaw's leadership is a tough act to follow. He founded Haribon Foundation which metamorphosed from a bird-watching society into one of the largest environmental nongovernment organizations in the Philippines.

He was also active in programs related to sustainable development and founded the Philippine Institute of Alternative Futures and Green Forum Philippines.

Another eco-warrior whose life is examined under the ICBP program is Sr. Aida Velasquez, a chemical engineer who became an activist nun and started Lingkod Tao-Kalikasan.

Macli-ing Dulag, the Kalinga *pangat* (peace-pact holder) who led the opposition to the Chico Dam project that would have flooded his community during the Marcos regime, was another eco-warrior model.

Success stories include the Infanta Community Food Security Program in Quezon for integrated farming, Bantay Dagat for sea stewardship, and Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water Foundation for organizing.

Heal the earth

Aside from compost-making and recycling, the students will be taught the rudiments of "journaling" (keeping journals) and community organizing, Mondoñedo says.

Also important is the "Our Earth, Our Body" module.

"It shows that the earth is the extension of our life and body and when you heal the earth, you also heal yourself," she says.

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LOOSE BREAKER FAILURE RELAYS AND ACCESSORIES

(Reference No.: PB060403-LE0055/PR No. PID-06-000018385)

1 The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board intends to apply the sum of *Php 9,980,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *PB060403-LE0055/PR No. PID-06-000018385, Supply and Delivery of Loose Breaker Failure Relays and Accessories.* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening Award shall be on a lot basis

2 The TRANSCO-HO now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Supply and Delivery of Loose Breaker Failure Relays and Accessories.* Delivery of the GOODS is required within sixty (60) calendar days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB

3 Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine resposiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, from the address below, from *May 23, 2006 to June 20, 2006* from *9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.* and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *Php 1,000.00.* The method of payment will be *Cash.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative

5. The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 06, 2006/1:30 P.M. at the address below

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before *June 21, 2006/2:00 P.M.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) of P99,800.00
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2% or P149,700.00
3. Surety bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%) or P249,000 00
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%) or P9,980,000.00

7. Bid opening shall be on *June 21, 2006/2:00 PM* at the *Admin Conference Room same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr Armando N Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812205/(632) 9812241
Fax No (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 23 & 30, 2006)

PNOC
PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Bldg. 5, 2nd Floor Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, City
Tel. No 893-1320, Local 5295

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

PURCHASE OF MECHANICAL SEALS UNDER GT-418061R1 / GT-517330
APPROVED BUDGET PHP 4,103,200.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Alejandro V. Andres starting May 18, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400 00 per document

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on May 30, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property, and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Purchasing Office Wall Clock Time) of *June 13, 2006* Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter Late bids shall not be accepted

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action

Chairman - Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI - May 23 & 26 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT LETTER OF INTENT

The Department of Transportation and Communications is hereby inviting prospective bidders/challengers to submit their Letter of Intent for the "Swiss Challenge" of the proposal to Finance, Design, Construct, Operate and Maintain the planned 23-km MRT Line 7 Project (EDSA/North Avenue, Quezon City to San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan) including its 22-km. road access component (NLEX Bocaue Exit to San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan) submitted by Universal LRT Corporation (BVI) Ltd., the original proponent of the project, through the Unsolicited Build, Gradual Transfer, Operate and Maintain Scheme, a variant of the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) mode.

The proposed bidding shall be governed by the BOT Law (R.A. No. 7718) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Submission of Letter of Intent shall not be later than 15 June 2006 addressed to The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee, DOTC at Unit 61, 6th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) ROBERT R. CASTAÑARES
BAC Chairman

(PDI-May 23, 29 & June 5, 2006)

Miriam dares fellow pols: Show true colors now

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANtiago wants fellow legislators who plan to run for president in 2010 to declare their intention now so the people would know why they are for or against amending the Constitution.

"The Constitution recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. Hence, the public has a right to know which legislators oppose the shift to a parliamentary system, particularly if they plan to run in 2010 under a presidential system," Santiago said.

At the same time, Santiago rejected the position of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments that Congress can amend the Charter without sitting as a constituent assembly.

The committee's chair, Sen. Richard Gordon, said any member of the Senate or House of Representatives can propose amendments to the Charter in the same way they enact laws except that constitutional amendments will have to be ratified through a plebiscite. Gordon has said he plans to propose this method to his counterpart, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, when they meet on Wednesday.

Santiago has made controversial statements putting her on a collision course with other senators since she joined President Macapagal-Arroyo in her recent state visit to Saudi Arabia.

Among other things, she said she would vote for the abolition of the Senate and join a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution even if the other senators refuse to take part.

"I humbly submit that based on settled jurisprudence, constituent power is not part of the legislative power conferred on Congress," she said, disputing Gordon's assertion that Congress can propose constitutional amendments just as it drafts new legislation. "Constituent power is a sovereign will of the people, who delegate it through the Constitution to any government department they choose—executive, legislative or judicial."

Santiago cited the 1976 case Sanidad vs. Comelec where Chief Justice Enrique Fernando stressed the distinction between legislative and constituent power of Congress as expressed in the 1935 Constitution.

But Gordon's committee cited the 1987 Constitution, which states in Article 17 that any amendment to or revision of the Constitution may be proposed by "the Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members," a constitutional convention, or by people's initiative.

"You cannot solve a problem by ignoring it. If the ordinary legislative procedure is followed, without convening a constituent assembly, the issue would eventually reach the Supreme Court. We may as well let the court to settle it now, rather than nibble at the fringes of the problem," Santiago said.

Prospects for La Mesa housing getting dimmer

By TJ Burgonio

THE ODDS APPEAR TO BE stacked against the retired employees of the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System (MWSS) who are bucking the opposition of environmentalists to the construction of their homes within the scenic, forested La Mesa Dam watershed.

The sprawling 59-hectare housing site lies within a critical area of the watershed and putting up a plant to treat the waste to be generated by the residents would run to the millions of pesos, Sen. Pia Cayetano said yesterday.

The 2,700-hectare watershed is the source of water for Metro Manila's 12 million residents.

"While the committee recognizes the right of the employees to the housing project—of which they had been deprived for decades, including the fact that this is titled land and there are property rights involved—this should be considered along with the interest of Metro Manila residents who depend on La Mesa for potable water," said Cayetano, chair of the Senate committee on environment, in a statement.

"Sustainable development dictates that there should be a balance between social progress and environmental protection and we urge all parties to work together for a viable solution," she said.

Quoting the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (Namria), Cayetano said the proposed housing project lies close to the La Mesa reservoir, a fact that was corroborated by MWSS officials.

"The threat of contamination is a distinct possibility," Cayetano said in the statement.

At last Tuesday's inquiry into the housing project by the Senate committee on environment, Namria Director Virgilio Basa admitted the project "lies within the rim" of the lake.

The project, which would benefit 1,411 MWSS retirees and their families, generated controversy after the Save the La Mesa Dam Coalition raised a howl over its construction because of the threat it posed to the watershed.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 23, 2006
6th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 16:22-34
Gospel: John 16:5-11

Jesus said to his disciples, "But now I am going to the One who sent me and none of you asks me where I am going; instead you are overcome with grief because of what I have said.

"Indeed believe me: It is better for you that I go away, because as long as I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go away, it is to send him to you, and when he comes, he will vindicate the truth in face of the world with regard to sin, to the way of righteousness, and to the Judgment.

"What has been the sin? They did not believe in me. What is the way of righteousness? I am on the way to the Father, meanwhile you will not see me. What Judgment? The Ruler of this world has himself been condemned."

Commentary

Again the disciples (Paul and Silas) are thrown into prison and flogged, but their chains drop from them and they become free. The jailer is distraught but becomes a believer, along with his household, and he becomes their sanctuary.

Jesus' words try to comfort, yet they speak the reality of harsh times they will know. But he encourages his friends. He sends the Paraclete, the comforter to them, and it is the Spirit that proves the world wrong about sin, justice and condemnation. This Spirit too is the power of truth and judgment in the world. They will know both the sober truth and the exhilar::tion of faith.

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Sharp decline in English skills threatens economy

FOR DECADES THE TROUBLED Philippine economy has been able to bank on one key asset in attracting foreign investors—proficiency in the English language.

In recent years, it has helped win outsourcing contracts in the booming business process and call center sectors, one of the few areas of the nation's economy that is actually expanding.

But even that lifeline appears a tenuous one as fears surface over a sharp decline in English compounded by falling school standards and a mass exodus of linguistically skilled professionals.

Business leaders are starting to question just how long the country can go on touting its English skills.

Some local and foreign business groups are so concerned they have started their own language centers to fill the gaps left by a deteriorating school system.

The European Chamber of Commerce warned recently that 75 percent of the country's annual 400,000 college graduates have "sub-standard English skills." With an exodus of teachers, especially in English and math, to better paying jobs overseas the country's education system is fast deteriorating.

Senator Edgardo Angara recently described the deterioration of the country's school system as a "ticking bomb." "We have practically squandered our intellectual capital," he said at a seminar.

He said that in all international achievement tests, the Philippines is rated near the bottom in all subjects.

"That is reflected in the fast deterioration of our education standards both in public and private schools." Official achievement tests given to graduating high school students in the 2004-2005 school year showed that only 6.59 percent could read, speak and comprehend English well enough to enter college. Some 44.25 percent had no English skills at all.

Eduardo Gullas, who filed a bill in 2004 to make English the medium of instruction at all levels in schools, has warned that the rapid decline in English competency would "eventually erode the competitiveness of the country's human resources, both here and abroad, in an increasingly globalized village." His bill is still sitting in the House of Representatives gathering dust.

"The employment of Filipinos overseas will soon be overtaken by China and India," Gullas said, warning that Filipino engineers in the Middle East risk being dislodged by Indian and Chinese engineers who not only speak better English, but analyze and write reports in English better.

Concerned with the decline in education, especially in English, the American and European chambers of commerce have begun ambitious training programmes in an attempt to reverse the trend.

The European Chamber, along with local business groups, recently launched a program called "English is Cool!" intended to revive the popularity of English among the country's youth.

In a globalized economy, "English is a ticket to the future," the chamber said, adding that only three out of 100 applicants meet proficiency standards of the outsourcing industry.

For program director Rina Tanchoco, the decline of English among Filipinos is "definitely repairable and reversible".

The Makati Business Club's Philippines-US Business Council and the American Chamber of Commerce are targeting their English proficiency program at teachers, students and the workforce.

The program hopes to have 50 computerized English language centers operating in the Philippines with 250 teachers and 42,000 students trained and certified within the next three years.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the education department to make English the primary medium of instruction nationwide, although the decree does not have the force of law to compel schools to do.

Although some subjects will still be taught in the national language, Tagalog, the Filipinos must recognize that English makes it internationally competitive, Ms Arroyo said in a policy speech earlier this year.

The decline of English sounds painful for Matthew Gray, an American who trains Filipinos to speak with American accents for jobs at call centers.

"Filipinos are pretty good but they still have lapses with their tenses, verb usage, subject-verb agreement—the basics," the Call Center Academy accent trainer told AFP.

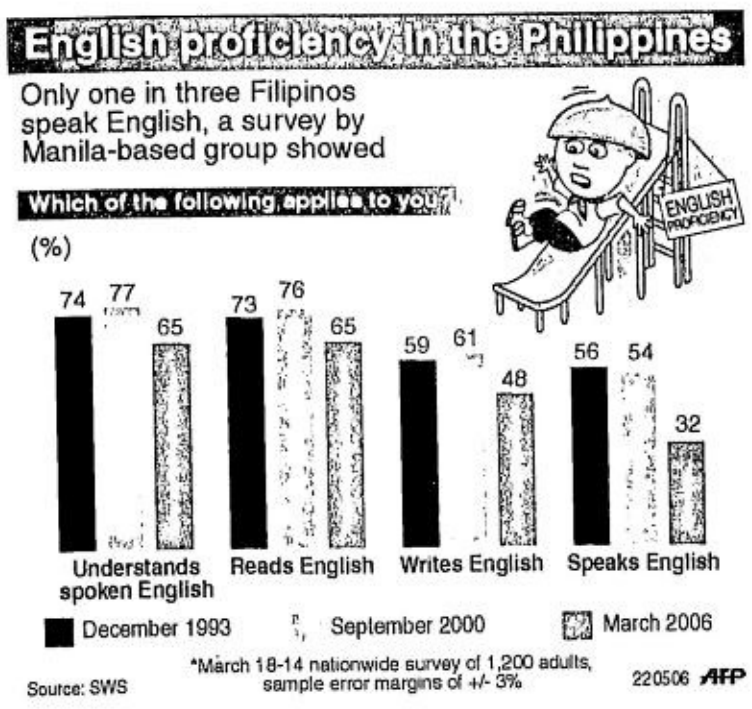
Peter Wallace, president of The Wallace Business Forum which regularly surveys foreign businesses in this country, said that only six percent of people interviewed for jobs in call centers had the required skills in English.

"So it's hard to see how the Philippines can compete with elsewhere," Wallace said.

There is plenty of blame to go around, with Gray faulting cellphone text messaging and the popularity of foreign soap operas dubbed into the Filipino language.

"There has been a steady decline from the time when the Philippines took pride in itself as one of the best English-speaking nations," said Neil Perez, an English and Literature lecturer at the University of Santo Tomas.

Perez blames the decline on the influence of pop culture and domestic media, where the dominant language is "taglish," a combination of Tagalog and English. *AFP*



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Don't impose new fees, CHEd warns private schools

By Alcuin Papa

THE COMMISSION on Higher Education (CHEd) warned private colleges and universities not to impose new miscellaneous fees as a way to offset a freeze on tuition increases.

CHEd Chair Carlito Puno told the INQUIRER that he has ordered his regional directors to submit reports on the new fees.

Puno made the warning after a consultation with militant student groups who are calling for a moratorium on tuition hikes.

"We have already put a cap on tuition increases but we heard from the students that there are new fees. That's not right. It's one way to circumvent the cap," Puno said.

Earlier, CHEd issued Memorandum No. 14 pegging tuition fee increases to the national inflation rate of 7.6 percent.

Puno had already called on private schools not to raise tuition, or if there are increases at 7.6 percent, to recall the increases. He said state colleges and universities are not allowed to raise tuition.

"Those new fees should be taken out because they are not approved (by the commission)," Puno said. He explained that since 95 percent of college students do not pay tuition in cash and not in full, "those fees can still be taken out, it's just a matter of recomputation."

On the issue of a moratorium on tuition increases, Puno said he would talk with representatives of private schools. "We might come to an agreement." He added that he would continue to dialogue with other stakeholders on the issue.

But he reported that no private school was allowed to increase their tuition above 7.6 percent. "If there is any school that increased their tuition beyond that, report it to us. They should help us monitor these things."

During the consultation, Puno also said he would join the militant student groups to ask for a bigger budget for state colleges and universities and "make some changes to CHEd memorandum 14."

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Senate slashes P31B from proposed P1.053-T budget

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE YESTERDAY SLASHED P31 billion from the proposed P1.053-trillion 2006 national budget by doing away with several "lump sum appropriations."

The senators' amendments to the money measure would decrease it by P35.54 billion but add P4.43 billion, for a net decrease of P31.11 billion, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said.

"What we seek to enact is a responsible and prudent budget, one that is concerned with quantity as well as quality of spending. Let us strive for budget discipline because there is no such thing as a free lunch," Villar said in his sponsorship of the measure.

The sponsorship of the bill by Villar, chair of the committee on finance, paved the way for debates on the measure today.

The senators deleted the P3-billion Kilos Asenso Fund and the P3.69-billion Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund, both viewed as "slush funds," and the P10-billion incentive package for employees availing of the government's rationalization program.

The Kilos Asenso Fund was intended to be the national government's counterpart fund in local government projects, while the Kalayaan Fund was supposed to bankroll livelihood and infrastructure projects in conflict areas.

The senators also deleted the P13.1-billion compensation adjustment fund and took away P2.721 billion intended for airports and navigational facilities for the Department of Transportation and Communication, as well as the P65.534-million budget of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG).

The chamber had earlier decided to back Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's proposal granting the PCGG a zero budget after its top officials defied Senate invitations to inquiries.

On the other hand, the senators added P350 million to the budget of the Department of Health, P100 million to the Commission on Higher Education, P100 million to the University of the Philippines and P50 million to the Agriculture and Fisheries Program for the Young Farmers Organization, among others.

The Senate expects to wind up its debates and approve the measure by Friday. It intends to go to the bicameral conference next week in keeping with its timetable of passing the appropriations act before Congress adjourns on June 9.

In his speech, Villar noted that the budget was "meatier" than the budgets of previous years.

"If in the past decade the national budget grew at an annual average of 9.85 percent, the 2006 budget, in contrast, will grow by as much as 14.7 percent amounting to P135 billion," he said.

"It has the highest annual increase in six years, from fiscal year 2000 when the budget increased by 17.59 percent."

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Evicted retired officers own homes, leave

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SOME OF THE 56 RETIRED SENIOR officers forcibly evicted from a naval housing area in Fort Bonifacio moved to other houses within the same military camp, but most were trucked by the military to their own homes in Metro Manila and the provinces, a Navy spokesperson said Monday.

Navy Capt. Geronimo Malabanan decried that some of the retirees vandalized the government-owned houses before giving them up during the eviction operations carried out by 1,000 soldiers Saturday and Sunday. Many of the evictees left unpaid water and electricity bills amounting to P7 million.

"Not one said they're going to pay," Malabanan said. "We're referring it to our legal officers for possible filing of appropriate cases."

While he claimed the evictees had up to P7 million in unpaid bills, the list he gave reporters contained only 10 names—supposedly the ones with the biggest debts—with unpaid bills totaling a little over P1 million.

Six of the 56 Navy and Marine officers evicted from the Bonifacio Naval Station had truckloads of belongings brought to the AFP Officers Village Association Inc. (AFPOVAI) and the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (Jusmag) compounds inside Fort Bonifacio.

"We don't know if they own the houses there. But they had their belongings brought there," Malabanan said.

Retired Commodore Alberto Orevillo, Navy Captains Jacinto Aquino and Walter Briones and Marine Col. Emmanuel Gloria moved to AFPOVAI units while Commodore Dario Fajardo and Navy Capt. Abraham Din sent their belongings to Jusmag quarters, Malabanan said.

Most of the 56 retired officers moved to homes within Metro Manila, while a few moved to Laguna and Cavite.

The farthest destination was San Carlos, Pangasinan, with no less than nine M35 military trucks used to transport retired Commodore Julito Casillan's belongings, Malabanan said. One retiree used up to 14 trucks to transport his belongings to Muntinlupa.

Garcia acquitted of perjury charge

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN'S THIRD DIVISION yesterday acquitted retired Armed Forces comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia from a perjury charge due to a technicality.

The case involved the alleged misrepresentation made by Garcia in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for the year 1990 where he only declared ownership of motor vehicles valued at P870,000.

In a 24-page decision, penned by Associate Justice Norberto Geraldez and concurred by Associate Justices Godofredo Legaspi and Efren dela Cruz, the antigraft court ruled that the prosecution failed to prove Garcia's guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

In its decision, the Third Division said while the prosecution was able to prove that the cost of the motor vehicles as stated by Garcia in his 1999 SALN was false, such falsehood was not willful and deliberate.

The vehicles in question include a Toyota Previa worth P521,797, registered under Garcia's name, and two other vehicles, registered under Garcia's wife, namely, a Mitsubishi L-300 Van De Luxe worth P425,583 and a Honda Civic worth P564,000.

"Thus, Garcia's knowledge of the false entry on the subject SALN was not present. Moreover, the prosecution failed to present any evidence to prove that the accused willfully and deliberately asserted the falsehood," the court said.

The perjury case was only one of the five criminal charges and two civil cases filed against Garcia.

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Dilemma

EDITORIAL

THE ISSUE OVER WHETHER THE MINING OPERATIONS of the Australian firm Lafayette on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay should be allowed to continue boils down to this: the island residents' health and livelihood and the integrity of the environment versus the expected tens of millions of dollars that the mine would earn, the jobs that it would open and the message that a ban on mining on the island would send to foreign investors.

Mining on Rapu-Rapu dates back to World War II, when the Japanese Imperial Army mined in one of the island barangays. Before Lafayette, four other companies operated on the island and left three of four rivers contaminated and an extensive tract of land barren and useless, according to the Institute on Church and Social Issues.

Back in September 2000, a multi-sectoral group, Sagip-Isla, Sagip Kapwa Inc., opposed mining on Rapu-Rapu, saying that full-scale, open-pit mining would destroy the ecological integrity of the island. It said mining never brought about the development of the town or alleviated the poverty of its people. Dr. Emelina Regis, an environmental scientist of the Ateneo de Naga University's Institute for Environmental Conservation and Research, said that mining results in acid mine drainage which pollutes water with high levels of iron, aluminum and sulfuric acid. This puts the health of the people at high risk.

Leodigario Binco, SSI acting president and a resident of Rapu-Rapu for almost 30 years, saw the effects of mining on the island. He said mining did not produce any long-term economic benefits for these communities. At first, there was a temporary "boom economy," but after the mining stopped, the town had to live with the irreparable damage to the land and rivers which are the sources of their livelihood from farming and fishing.

Rapu-Rapu is experiencing again the bad effects of mining. In January this year, the Pollution Adjudication Board ruled that Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc. owned by Lafayette violated the Clean Water Act when it discharged waste water with a high cyanide content into creeks in October 2005. It fined the company a total of ₱10.7 million.

Mayor Benito Doma of Prieto-Diaz said that the P10.7-million fine was not enough to ensure that Lafayette would install safeguards to prevent another mine spill that caused fish kills on the island. Clemente Bautista of Kalikasan-PNE also said the P10.7-million fine was not sufficient to cover the environmental and social damage that the series of tailings spills brought about. He also indicated that the fine was not commensurate to the expected income of Lafayette—about $41 million (roughly P2.1 billion) a year—from its polymetallic mining project.

A Malacañang-formed commission headed by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes basically came up with similar findings when it recommended the stoppage of the operations of Lafayette on Rapu-Rapu, the cancellation of the environmental compliance certificate issued to two Lafayette companies and a moratorium on mining on the island. The commission also called for a review of the liberalized mining law.

Malacañang, however, has stood firm on its policy to allow big foreign companies to operate mines. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said a ban is not the answer, "but the standards and safeguards already in place and existing laws must be enforced." Lafayette president Carlos Dominguez said the company had spent more than P400 million on remedial measures in the area to prevent any environmental disasters in the area. He also asked what would happen to the 1,000 employees of the company and to the economic benefits for the community if a ban were imposed.

The Lafayette mine is the first in the Philippines to be developed by a foreign company in almost four decades and has yielded 2,500 ounces of gold. Benjamin Philip Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines, said the government decision allowing foreign investment in the mining industry would ensure the flow of $10 billion into the economy. Foreign investors are now watching how the government would act on the current controversy.

The government is facing a dilemma on the Lafayette issue. But it could still enforce a temporary moratorium while a second, or even a third opinion, is sought from an international agency (or agencies) on the ecological integrity of the mining operation. At the same time, a study might be conducted to find out if the Lafayette operation would benefit only the foreign company and not produce any long-term economic benefits for the community.

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readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph • Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342

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Fish anyone?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WITH A DERISIVE CURL OF THE LIP, THEY call it "trash fish." Locals call it "*dayok*" —a word lifted from the trawlers of the 1950s. That's for the undersized, poor-quality fish that housewives, leashed to thin budgets, buy as a last choice.

Yet, these "discards" are stirring a storm affecting lucrative livestock and fish farms as well as half-empty plates on dinner tables, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says.

Trash fish—juveniles, small and often damaged by rough handling—do not command premium prices. But they are processed as feed or oil for poultry or cattle troughs and fish ponds.

"A dangerous spiral has evolved where the demand for low-value trash fish has supported increased fishing pressure on already degraded resources," the FAO's "Asian Fisheries Today" study warns. "Coastal resources are being 'fished down the food chain.' And the percentage of trash fish has risen considerably in recent years."

In human diet today, "fish is the last wild meal," Worldwatch Institute notes. The Philippines was No. 6 among the Top 10 marine capture fisheries producers in Asia and the Pacific.

Today, however, roughly two-thirds of the world's major stocks are fished at, or beyond, their capacity. Another 10 percent have been harvested so heavily that populations will take years to recover.

Throughout the Philippines, over-fishing and habitat destruction have sliced into fish catch. Lamon Bay, 160 km south of Manila, is one of the country's Top 10 fishing grounds. "But its fish catch has been declining by 13.5 percent annually—more than twice the national average of 5.4 percent," a Los Baños study shows. Over a 30-year period, fish catches, in Candijay, Bohol, Olango Island and San Miguel Bay dropped by 90 percent.

Demand for fish has spiraled as populations grew. Virtually all growth in the global catch today comes from farmed fish. Aquaculture has also taken up the slack in the Philippines.

Once limited mainly to bangus, these farms today produce carp, oysters, shrimps, mud crabs, etc. They account for 34 centavos out of every peso earned from fish products.

If the trend over the last 10 years holds, this industry will grow at 6 percent yearly. We ranked ninth for marine/brackish water ponds. For inland aquaculture, the Philippines was 11th.

Among other countries, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India have been spurring aquaculture to provide protein jobs as well as export earnings. Shrimps and fish, for Japanese tempura shops and sushi bars, do bring in yens.

"And eating fish at least once a week slowed the rate of mental or cognitive decline in elderly people by 10-13 percent per year," writes researcher Martha Clare Morris, ScD, of Rush University Medical Center. The Archives of Neurology says, "That rate of reduction is equivalent to being three to four years younger in age."

Fish is the main source of protein for fisherfolk, admittedly the poorest of the poor. These families cluster on small, infertile land parcels or squat on marginal coastal lands, vulnerable to typhoons, accidents.

It is along the coasts where people feel most sharply the squeeze between numbers and depleted resources. Worldwide, more than three billion people live along a coastline or within 200 kilometers of one. And coastal population may double by 2025. The same pattern prevails here.

This concentration of people, however, is threatening vital coastal ecosystems like coral reefs. The Philippines, Kenya, Liberia and Puerto Rico have lost over 70 percent of their mangroves. Most fish produce their young inshore. They feed on organisms in coastal waters.

"Are fisherfolk poor because they are fishers," asks the FAO study. "Or are they fishers because they are poor?"

Because of its "open access nature, and lack of alternative incomes, fisheries is often the employment of last resort." All arguments end with the same conclusion: "Small-scale fisheries equals poverty."

There is an ethical argument for giving priority to the poor to fish, FAO notes. Chronic hunger is rife in fishing villages. It's no small irony that those who bring fish to our dinner tables often can't afford it.

Aquaculture, however, could be crippled if the supply for meal were aborted. About a quarter of total fish caught today ends up as fish meal in poultry farms or shrimp ponds. They call this "the fish meal trap."

"There has been a prominent debate on the relevance of the fish meal trap," the FAO notes. Today's surge of aquaculture could falter if ponds do not get the meal and oil needed. "The culture of many species rely on fish meal and oil for growth… The natural limits of fish meal and oil will, in the future, restrict the development of global aquaculture."

The Philippines will need about 226,000 tons of fish meal for its ponds. But it produces only 78,000 tons. A significant proportion must be imported.

Like the Philippines, Thailand has large fish meal factories. In Bangladesh, this has remained a household-level enterprise. India is shifting to exports of high quality fish and fishery products. A surge in demand from poultry and fish farms has sent China scampering to support this enterprise.

The "fish meal trap" has raised unanswered questions for the future. "Who are the beneficiaries and losers of the current system?" the FAO asks. "And how would that change through management interventions?"

Chew on that with your next order of fish fillet.

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Motivations

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AS I WRITE THIS, THE DETROIT PISTONS have just clawed out a game they needed to win against the Cleveland Cavaliers. As have the San Antonio Spurs against the Dallas Mavericks, bringing all the NBA semifinalists, except for Miami and New Jersey, to fight a take-no prisoners, war-of-attrition, Game 7. But for readers who aren't into basketball, don't worry, this column isn't about those games, though heaven knows they've been a pure joy to watch, making losing sleep eminently worth it. This is about something those games have illustrated dramatically over the past weeks.

That is the motivational power of insult or humiliation.

That's something the Cavaliers, in particular, have shown. Nobody gave them a ghost of a chance to win against the Pistons. Though they have the phenomenal Lebron James, a 21-year-old whose athletic skills probably surpass even Jordan's and whose basketball maturity is well beyond his years, they also have a pretty mediocre supporting cast which produced a pretty mediocre showing during the regular season. By contrast, the Pistons have never been better, winning 64-18 during that season and adding a dimension to their game that wasn't there before. Under new coach Flip Saunders, late of the lamentable Minnesota Timberwolves, the Pistons have become a mean scoring machine while remaining a juggernaut at defense.

It was lopsided in the extreme, and the experts gave them pretty much the same odds as the odds-makers did then between David and Goliath. Indeed—and here comes the part about the motivational power of insult—they went further and ridiculed Cleveland's plight, or ambition. The real match, Charles Barkley said, was between San Antonio and Dallas—that was "going to be a monster series." But the one between Cleveland and Detroit, you could forget it, he scoffed. "The Pistons will maul them (the Cavaliers)."

He was right about San Antonio and Dallas, he was wrong about Cleveland and Detroit. Dead wrong. I must confess I bought that prediction and the start of that series did little to disabuse me of it. The Pistons did maul the Cavaliers in the first two games, rubbing their noses in the dirt. Tayshaun Prince, in particular, gave the world to see the extent of their domination by swatting the ball away from James' hand as he was about to dunk it.

But lo and behold, the Cavaliers fought back. Maybe it was the mauling they got during the first two games. Coaches have been known to be leery of blowouts in a series. All too often, they do not result in the opponent being demoralized, they result in the opponent coming back with the hustle of the humiliated—and winning the next game, or games. Or maybe it was Rasheed Wallace's acerbic tongue, Rasheed, like Barkley, being a veritable wellspring of quotable quotes. After the Cavs won Game 3, Rasheed said it was a fluke and predicted Game 4 would be the last time the Cavs played in their home court.

Maybe it was all that, the Cavs getting fed up with the taste of dirt. Next game, they metamorphosed into, well, the Pistons themselves, playing the kind of rugged defense the Pistons had shown all season, and reducing their foes to arguing with the referees rather than playing their normal game. The Cavs won and the irrepressible Rasheed again burst out when asked if the match might produce a different outcome than he thought: "No way in hell they're going to beat us in a series!"

And still the next game the Cavaliers found a way in hell to do so, or at least threaten to do so. They beat the hell out of the Pistons in their own turf, and brought Cleveland as near to basketball heaven as has ever been all its life. I was, of course, one of those who rooted for them last Saturday morning (Manila time), hoping to see a Cinderella story reach its happily-ever-after ending.

Alas, things that are too good to be true, as they say, often are, and this one was no exception. The Cavaliers got bludgeoned off the boards in the last minute of a very tight game, and lost. And not without supreme irony: Rasheed Wallace did them in. What can one say? The guy talks the talk but walks the walk. And well, the basketball gods are certifiably crazy.

But who knows? Maybe the Cavs can still pull off the Cinderella ending. Of course, they'll be playing Game 7 in Detroit; of course, Detroit isn't taking things lightly and is prepared for war; of course, Detroit is still Goliath. But wasn't that always the case? And didn't David deliver the goods with a slingshot? "Believe," say the headlines of Cleveland newspapers. It's enough to make you want to.

Never underestimate the power of pride, but even more, never underestimate the power of insult. Which is probably just two ways of saying the same thing. You have pride, you won't swallow insult. The people who have risen to tremendous heights after being insulted or humiliated are too many to overlook. Albert Einstein himself never got particularly high grades in math, and many great artists and people in sports were once told by their teachers and high school coaches they might want to consider other careers. They went on to prove them wrong.

Jose Rizal himself caught a glimpse of that when he attributed the indio's discovery of self-worth to the conquistador's insults. After being abused physically, he had to bear the added abuse of being called names. His *amor propio* was pricked, and he rebelled.

That presumes, of course, that you've got pride, to begin with, to rise to great heights after being brought down to your knees. You kind of wonder where ours went in the light of the Filipino, the local metamorphosis of the late indio, being lied to apart from being flogged daily today. And just grinning and bearing it.

But that's quite another story, or sport.

Reuter: RP richer in spirit than the West

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FR. JAMES B. REUTER, S.J., CELEBRATED HIS 90th birthday last May 21 with an impressive array of activities that included a decoration by President Macapagal-Arroyo, a birthday Mass celebrated principally by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales at the St. Paul's Quezon City Chapel, the Magnificat Award from the Archdiocese of Manila and the launch of a book of his writings, plays and speeches, titled "Legacy." These events were savored especially by his younger brother and sister, Kenneth and Nancy, who traveled from New York with their spouses, his nephew James and niece Susan to be with him.

Cardinal Rosales wondered with a laugh how he could summarize in a brief homily the lifetime of such a multi-talented and energetic personality, but he nevertheless tried by tracing Reuter's 63 years in RP as teacher and communicator, priest and missionary. He said the classroom, the sports field and the drama stage were never enough for this prodigious teacher whose energies later spilled out into radio. Even before the Mr. & Ms. Magazine of Eggie Apostol came out against Marcos' martial law, the cardinal recalled, Reuter was already communicating the ills of martial law. But above all, Reuter was a priest who wanted to communicate love. All the fairness and competence he taught his young students in the classroom or in the sports field, he also infused into his ministry as he sought and fought for the truth.

* * *

Reuter's response began with his characteristic humor: he worried that all the paeans of praise being showered on him would convince the Father in Heaven that he was already having his reward on earth. He stressed that during all these decades in RP he was deeply inspired by the "Catholicity" of the Filipino soul, which has made our country richer than those of the West. This country, he said, may be poor in the material things, but it's very rich in spirit, in its devotion to life. Reuter opined that this spirit is best epitomized by Jose Rizal during his farewell to Josephine Bracken, whom he married just before his martyrdom, when he said that we Filipinos have only the land, **the sea, sun and rain and not much else, but in our nothingness, precisely, we have also discovered that we have each other.**

* * *

The birthday Mass was attended by many personalities who had come under Reuter's influence over the decades. Among those I spotted were noted Paulinian stage actress Cristina Castaner, who later became Mrs. Juan Ponce Enrile, and longtime INQUIRER columnist Larry Henares. Larry told me he's the only one surviving from his AB sophomore class of 1941, the first class that Reuter taught at the Ateneo after his arrival in Manila in 1938. Overhearing this, Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon quipped that Larry is the typical example of the old adage, "*Yerba mala nunca muere.*"

* * *

Easily one of the most exciting personalities in the on-going 31st Unesco-International Theater Institute World Congress being hosted by the Philippines is a glamorous London-educated Bangladeshi former fashion model and designer, who has won the coveted title of Unesco "Artist for Peace" and its "Peace Prize," which has put her on par with such famous personalities as South Africa's Nelson Mandela, Ernesto Cardenale, Mikhail Gorbachev, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Hans Blix. Bibi Russell used to be a much-sought after black model for some of the biggest fashion houses in the world, such as Yves Saint Laurent, Kenzo, Karl Lagerfield and Giorgio Armani. Today, she's known for her tireless and unfailing commitment to human dignity, development and the eradication of poverty in her native Bangladesh.

* * *

Her tool has been the company she put up to develop and strengthen the rich weaving heritage of her country, called Bibi Productions. But it's more than just about weaving rich textiles and creating luxurious embroidery for this model-entrepreneur. Rather, it's about 35,000 weavers, crafts people and tailors that she has linked up with in an inspiring example of micro-financing, in which Bangladesh has been a pioneer. Artisans make all of her accessories, including buttons and shoes, and many women weavers and crafts people today have become self-sufficient through her work. She has also succeeded in drawing the attention of the international fashion industry to the skills of weavers in her country, by helping them find new outlets through her fashion shows in Bangladesh, North America, India and Africa. Today the world is very much her stage, as she promotes not just Bangladeshi weavers but those from all over the world. For such efforts, her special envoy title was replaced by another title given in November 2001: "Unesco Artist for Peace."

Russell's story reminds me very much of our own fashion and fabric entrepreneurs who have also pioneered in the development of indigenous fashion-weaving, such as former Slim's model Jeanne Goulbourn, Narda Capuyan of Baguio and Dita Sandico-Ong. May their tribe increase!

* * *

SM cinemas around the country have as a matter of policy not shown movies rated R-18, or for adults only. But even before the Motion & Television Review & Classification Board (MTRCB) came out with an R-18 rating for the controversial "The Da Vinci Code," the family of Henry Sy reportedly had made up its mind not to show it in their theaters. The film's promoters were quoted as lamenting that they would suffer a huge drop in income as a result of the SM movie chain's boycott. But Sy reportedly reasoned that the MegaMall in Mandaluyong has a chapel on the 5th floor where the exposed Blessed Sacrament is adored by hundreds of people every day, so how can they show the movie that desecrates Jesus Christ?

Sy makes a lot of sense.

The 'matrona's' delight

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CALL HIM THE *MATRONA'S* DELIGHT.

When Paul Anka descended the stage at the Araneta Coliseum and waded into the crowd, he was immediately swamped by women bearing phone cameras, eyes gleaming with a singular goal: to get a picture taken with the singer and possibly ambush him with a kiss (but chastely, on the cheek).

One lucky lady, by the name of "Tess" even snagged the biggest prize of all, a "sweet" number with Anka who capped the number by thanking her and crooning, "Best of all, you're just my size!"

Viewing the goings-on at the ringside portion was an added treat in Anka's recent concert, billed "Paul Anka...Live in Manila: I Did it My Way." As if the musical trip through five decades of pop hits and romantic standards was not enough for a night's entertainment, there was also the added lift of guffawing at the *matronas'* mad chase of the diminutive singer, lit by the glow of countless cell phones.

Clearly, Paul Anka magic lives! Never underestimate the drawing power of a pop idol who wrote and performed music people fell in love by or at least fantasized their future loves by. Each time he sang the first lines of songs like "Diana," "I'm Just a Lonely Boy," or "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," a sigh would rise from the audience, and everyone would start singing along, filling in the gaps as Anka held out his mike to them.

* * *

BUT it wasn't just a musical trip through a generation's fading youth. The concert was also a chance to appreciate Anka the songwriter, especially when he featured (through a film clip) a song he had written for Sammy Davis Jr. whose title I'd forgotten (Anka did say it hadn't been a hit) but which, when sung by the man whom Anka described as a performer without peer, was a moving anthem to individual dignity and courage.

Early on, the screen came down for "Times of Your Life," written as a commercial ditty but which has since become one of Anka's most beloved hits. The "slide show" turned out to be another nostalgia trip, with footage of the singer's first appearance in Manila when he still had a shockingly full head of hair, and on to family pictures of his five daughters and grandchildren.

And of course, would any Anka concert be complete without "My Way," one of two songs that he said he'd written for Frank Sinatra and which he performed as a duet, by way of an audio feed, with Ol' Blue Eyes himself. The soulful number brought the house down, but the night wasn't over yet. Giving in to demands for encore after encore, Anka launched into danceable tunes like "New York, New York" that had the entire audience on their feet, clapping and dancing, and sharing in the good feeling.

Obviously, Manila loves Anka and one got the feeling that Anka reciprocated, too. And for those who missed the chance to see Anka live, there's always a boxed CD set that contains his hits from the 1950s to the 1980s, as well as his love songs.

* * *

WE were at the SM Mall of Asia last Sunday for the "X-Men III" preview (more on the movie in a later column), giving us a chance to walk through the complex which is supposedly the third largest shopping mall in Asia, if not the world.

Vehicles were parking blocks away along the wide roads surrounding the mall, but we persisted in driving all the way to the parking lot near Hypermart. When we spotted an empty slot, we congratulated ourselves, only to realize later that the movie houses, in the "entertainment plaza," lay way on the other side of the complex, necessitating a brisk 15-20 minute walk through busy sidewalks and a congested outdoor eating area.

It seemed all of Metro Manila had the same idea and was paying a visit to the Mall of Asia. A good number of them were even pushing carts filled with grocery bags, a good sign of brisk business. We first entered the I-Max hall, where families were slumped on the carpeted floor or ogling the different exhibits, but we were told the "regular" movie houses were to be found on the second floor.

After a few wrong turns, we finally found the cinemas by an open area where a live and loud performance was going on, adding to the general confusion. We wondered how the mall builders were planning to cope with the rains, since much of the complex is open to the elements. We remembered what friends from Baguio recalled to us with amusement: how SM Baguio must be the only mall in the world where shoppers have to lug umbrellas indoors, with the mountain winds driving in rain through the wide patio doors.

* * *

STILL, SM Mall of Asia stands as an amazing piece of architecture and business daring. We happened to pass by the Olympic-size ice skating rink and were properly impressed, especially with the pint-sized ice dancers swirling on the frigid floor, with no pesky pillar (as in the MegaMall rink) spoiling the view. But walking through the sales floor can be a daunting challenge. Are local shoppers and moviegoers ready for wandering through five kilometers of shops, restaurants, stalls, eateries and amenities?

After the movie, we ducked into a crepes and ice cream parlor for a late snack and espied the family of Dr. Pinggoy and Evelyn Duran, second cousins of mine, who likewise marveled at the size of the place. "Isn't this huge?" commented Pinggoy. "We're pooped and we've just walked through one section!"

I don't think we'll be making too many trips to Mall of Asia, since we live all the way on the other side of town in Antipolo. But the next time we plan an excursion to the reclamation area, I'm throwing myself into an exercise regimen. I don't relish the thought of collapsing in exhaustion just to catch a movie or a bite. Malling shouldn't be this strenuous!

The discreet terror of Fidel Castro

WORLD VIEW

Václav Havel, Madeleine Albright, André Glucksmann, Arpád Göncz, Vytautas Landsbergis and Adam Michnik

THIS SPRING MARKS THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY of the wave of repression in which Fidel Castro's regime arrested and handed down long sentences to 75 leading Cuban dissidents. Soon afterwards, many friends and I formed the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba.

The bravery of those who found their social conscience, overcame fear and stood up to communist dictatorship remains fresh in my memory. It reminds me of the jingle of keys that rang out on Prague's Wenceslas Square—and later around the rest of what was then Czechoslovakia—in the autumn of 1989.

This is why I rang keys during the conference calling for democracy in Cuba that our committee held in Prague three years ago. I wanted to draw the international community's attention to the human-rights situation in Cuba, to support that country's opposition, and to encourage all pro-democratic forces. The European Union then introduced diplomatic sanctions, albeit mostly symbolic, against Castro's regime.

Soon after, however, a contrary position came to the fore. The EU opened a dialogue with the Cuban regime, sanctions were conditionally suspended, and it was even made clear to dissidents that they were not welcome at the embassies of several democratic countries. Cowardly compromise and political alibis—as so often in history—defeated a principled position. In return, the Cuban regime made a sham gesture by releasing a small number of the prisoners of conscience—mostly those who were tortured and seriously ill—who the regime most feared would die in its notorious prisons.

Those of us who live in Europe's new post-communist democracies experienced similar political deals when we lived behind the former Iron Curtain. We are also extremely familiar with the argument that European policies have not led to any mass arrests in Cuba. But democracy has shown weakness and the Cuban regime has in turn adapted its tactics.

Respected organizations like Reporters without Borders and Amnesty International have collected ample evidence of violence and intimidation against freethinking Cubans, who can expect a different kind of ring than that from jangling keys. Their cases often do not end in courts but in hospitals. Groups of "fighters for the revolution"—in reality, the Cuban secret police—brutally attack their political opponents and accuse them of absurd crimes in an effort to intimidate them or to force them to emigrate. On the island, such planned harassments are called "*actos de repudio*"—(acts of rejection).

Political violence that creates the impression of mere street crime is never easy to prove, unlike jail terms of several years, and therefore it does not receive due attention from the world. However, thousands of former political prisoners in central and eastern Europe can attest to the fact that a kick from a secret policeman on the street hurts just as much as a kick from a warden behind prison gates.

The powerlessness of the victim of state-organized street fights and threats against his family is experienced in the same way as the powerlessness of somebody harassed during a state security investigation. Many European politicians who have sought to see the situation on the ground have been barred in recent years.

Some Europeans apparently regard Cuba as a faraway country whose fate they need take no interest in, because they have problems of their own. But what Cubans are enduring today is part of our own European history. Who better than Europeans, who brought communism to life, exported it to the world and then paid dearly for it over many decades, know better about the torments inflicted upon the Cuban people?

Humanity will pay the price for communism until such a time as we learn to stand up to it with all political responsibility and decisiveness. We have many opportunities to do so in Europe and Cuba. And it is no surprise that the new member countries of the EU have brought to Europe fresh historical experience, and with it far less understanding for and tolerance of concession and compromise.

Representatives of the EU's member states will meet in Brussels in mid-June to review a common policy toward Cuba. European diplomats should weigh up the consequences of accommodating Castro's regime. They should show that they will neither ignore his practices nor neglect the suffering of Cuban prisoners of conscience. We must never forget the seemingly anonymous victims of Castro's "acts of rejection." —*Project Syndicate*

Václav Havel, is a former president of the Czech Republic and a founder of the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba. Madeleine Albright is a former United States secretary of state. André Glucksmann is a French philosopher, Arpád Göncz is a former president of Hungary. Vytautas Landsbergis is a former president of Lithuania. And Adam Michnik, a former Polish dissident, is editor in chief of Gazeta Wyborcza.

Breaking the wall

YOUNG BLOOD

Yani S. Bautista

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I WAS NEVER CLOSE TO ANY OF MY SIBLINGS' FRIENDS. It's as if I have this wall between them and me. The wall goes even higher with their boyfriend or girlfriend (whenever they would have one), but that's another story.

I may be five to seven years their senior, but I know that is not reason enough to be grumpy yet. Or heck, yes, maybe it's the age gap that's making me intolerant of the noise their friends make whenever they come to the house to watch movies or listen to music or simply share stories. But I do make some effort to be polite to them whenever they call or hang out, responding to the usual "Hello, Ate!" or "*Ate, alis na kami.*"

Come to think of it, my sister's and my brother's friends are nice kids. I think the problem is me. However, had I known that one of them would be leaving so soon, I would have gone beyond just being polite to her.

I must have seen Laura only a couple of times, although she and my sister were schoolmates since their kindergarten days. I hardly remember speaking with her. But I can tell exactly how pretty she was from the photos my sister is keeping: tall, full-figured, fair-skinned—very mestiza, actually.

Laura left when they were in their third year of high school. She decided to leave everything behind, including her good education and her rather comfortable life. She gave in to what she referred to then as her "calling."

When I heard about it, I completely understood what she wanted to do. Having gone to a state university for college, I am not new to patriotism being expressed in that manner.

As Laura grew more deeply involved in the movement, my sister, their friends and schoolmates went on to finish high school.

I can recall being in my sister's recognition and graduation rites. Despite Laura's absence, her name was mentioned several times in some of the speeches, as her batch mates praised her for having made such a daring decision.

I remember wondering aloud to some of their batch mates what she could be doing.

"She's in the middle of an insurgency," someone suggested. "She could be giving lectures to new recruits."

Another one said, "She could have gotten married inside the movement."

From these different answers, I could tell that they had lost contact with her. She could have also changed her name, I thought, and given the situation, that was only to be expected. She could be moving around some remote places while her batch mates were busy choosing courses and taking exams for admission to different universities.

A few days after my sister graduated from college, she got a text message from a fellow alumna of their high school. The message was brief: Laura had been killed.

I asked some questions, and piecing together what my sister told me and what I could gather from her friends, I learned that Laura and three others had been shot several times by men believed to be from the military. Witnesses said the killings happened in a very busy place in Bicol, and in broad daylight yet!

I forbade my sister from going to the wake at first, and we ended up arguing. I wanted her to stay away from what I then called a "mess." Then I learned that Laura's father also died in an ambush some years earlier and under the same circumstances. And that was when I dropped all the what-if's in my mind and shed all my worries and my cowardice. I said to myself: Why couldn't you just be a considerate, understanding *ate* this time? I broke down the wall, and let my sister go to see Laura for the last time.

As I write this, I still cannot get Laura off my mind. And I cannot get over the fact that the young woman was killed by armed men believed to belong to the forces of the government that she was fighting. The most common reaction to her death was to say, "That is no way to die for a 21-year-old girl!" But think about it, is there really a "better" way to die for someone who's so young?

Death is always and in all ways painful for people close to the one who died. Laura's was a death that served a purpose, a death that earned the respect of many who had been, in one way or another, a part of her life. Hers is a fight that has grown old through time. Her family, friends and colleagues must be proud of her.

My own feeling is best said in our language, "*Ipagpasa-Diyos na lang muna natin.*" Let's just leave everything to God.

Yani S. Bautista, 25, writes for a television network and wants to combine TV show writing and writing for print because her brother has yet to finish college. Laura isn't the real name of her sister's friend.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Mob mentality

"I almost exonerated them. But I didn't, if only to satisfy the mob."

—Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on his decision to downgrade the charges against three of the four US Marines accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipino last November

Criminal-friendly

"I now realize why our country's justice system is called the criminal justice system. That's because justice (here) is only for the criminals...We are a criminal-friendly country."

—Thelma Chiong, whose two daughters were raped and murdered, on the commutation of all death sentences

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The 'shift' we really need

TODAY, MOST FILIPINOS ARE WASTING so much time and energy on trivial matters. They may be valid concerns, but there are other more important things—and opportunities. I think what we really need is a paradigm shift. Let's be pro-active.

Since I was a child, I always liked to look at the brighter side of our country, despite all the problems we face. In school, the first two lines of our national anthem always made me proud and secure in the thought that we are a rich country, "The Pearl of the Orient," and I believe in this to this day.

I also believe that we have so much to look forward to in the near future, if we would be humble enough to live within our means, to look into what we have in abundance, and sincerely and selflessly work together for the benefit of the majority of our people, especially the poor. This may sound so simple but we are capable of doing this. All that is needed is humility and genuine love for people.

We are a creative, innovative and tough nation. We have shown to ourselves and other countries that we can stand the heat. We are a blessed race. We have fertile, arable lands. There is no winter to worry about. We have more than an ample supply of water. Let us count our blessings. Why look out there and be bitter that we are being left economically far behind by our neighboring countries? They, like us, have their blessings—and challenges and problems, too. But I'd rather look in than look out, though we can learn from their mistakes.

If we really reflect deeper, we really have a paradise for a country. This is our land and let us treasure this and every natural thing it nurtures. We should love this land as it has loved us always.

Let's bring out the best in us and freely share our talents. It's 2006! The latest of science and technology is within our reach. Are we willing to think and grow "solar" and to use horses as alternative transportation in the rural areas? Are we humble enough to ride bikes to go to work? Are we ready for organic farming? Are we ready to let go of our "addictions to things western" and start patronizing our own products? If not, we will remain confused, in deep trouble.

Also important is the media. Especially the TV networks; they can play a big, big role in educating many Filipinos. How I wish that they air more wholesome shows. For example, how I wish ABS-CBN's next batch of "Pinoy Big Brother" contestants will also consist of nationalistic and patriotic Filipinos or environmentalists, not just show-biz stars or would-be stars. And let's see how much insight and inspiration the whole nation would get from the program after 90 days of live coverage. This is just an example.

There are so many more ways we can imagine to improve things in our country. There is always a bright side to a problem to look at to.

Let's make this "real shift."

—PATRICK S. LACSON,
Talisay City,
Negros Occidental,
draftbar@yahoo.com

Should SC allow a constituent assembly

THIS REFERS TO INQUIRER'S MAY 18 editorial titled "Madame Miriam." (This is not the first time the editorial writer has shown bias against the senator.) Resorting to name-calling and character assassination, the editorial fell short of providing an intelligent discussion of the issues; it belittled the senator's public statements, calling them "predictions" and "fortune-telling," whose basis is "too thin, without sustenance."

As a constitutional law expert who has taught the subject in the UP College of Law for some 10 years, Santiago wanted to educate the public on the possible scenario should the Supreme Court rule that Charter change could be proposed by three-fourths votes of Congress voting as a whole, instead of separately. With a ruling like that, she said, Congress would likely convene itself into a constituent assembly come July 24, 2006.

The editorial also took exception to the senator's statement that should the Supreme Court uphold the creation of the constituent assembly, she would participate in it because she did not want to forfeit by default her duty to help write the new Constitution. The editorial said: "This came as a surprise, because until last week we did not realize she thought she was elected in 2004 to write a new Constitution in 2006."

The creation of a constituent assembly is provided for in the present Constitution. Under Article 17, Sec. 1 of the Charter, "Any amendment to, or revision of, this Constitution may be proposed by: (1) The Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its Members; x x x." The participation by each member of Congress in a constituent assembly is a duty mandated by the present Charter. The rule is that where a public body or officer has been clothed by statute with power to do an act which concerns the public interest or the rights of third persons, the execution of the power may be insisted on as a duty though the phraseology of the statute be merely permissive and not peremptory. (Newburgh Turnp. Co. v. Miller, 5 Johns. NY Ch. 101, 113, 9 Am. Jur. 274) Certainly, one should not begrudge a lawmaker for being willing to fulfill a duty mandated by law.

Lastly, the editorial made short shrift of Santiago's statement that the abolition of the Senate to give way to a unicameral parliament will save the government over P1 billion per year, or more than P5 billion until 2010. For the information of INQUIRER's readers, this estimate of the senator is an educated guess based on the more than P1.312 million allocated for the Senate by House version of the proposed 2006 budget.

—CAMILLE LLAMANZARES SEVILLA,
chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Rm, 518,
Senate of the Philippines,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

No 'mansions' in MWSS housing

WE HAVE A VERY HIGH REGARD FOR the INQUIRER, which is known for fair and balanced reporting, and for Neal Cruz, a respected journalist whose columns we read regularly. That is why we were surprised to read his May 15 column which alleged that: (1) there are mansions being constructed at the MWSS Housing Project site; and (2) the MWSS Housing Project is for MWSS executives.

Cruz must have been fed wrong information.

No mansion is being constructed at the MWSS Housing Project. The project is not just for executives. It is for all MWSS officials and employees.

Of the 94 housing units already completed or under construction, 31 (33 percent) have a floor area of 36 or 44 square meters each. They cost only P345,000-P390,000 per unit.

Thirty-two units (34 percent) are modified versions of the 44-sq m model—with extension or mezzanine.

Only 31 units (33 percent) have second floors. Of these, only 10 of these can be considered big. But certainly, they cannot be described as "mansions."

My house, for instance, is just a one-bedroom unit with a floor area of only 60 sq m. The houses of the senior deputy administrator and the deputy administrator for operations are just two-bedroom bungalows. The houses that can be considered as relatively big units belong not to the executives, but to senior rank-and-file employees who either dipped into their life-long family savings, or sold some property or secured a loan to finance the construction of their houses.

The housing project was conceived way back in the early '90s but was started only in 2002.

The housing site, now owned by the MWSS Corporate Office Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MCMC), was part of a titled property of the MWSS. It is definitely not part of the La Mesa Watershed. It was granted a Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) in November 1999, after complying with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Statements System.

The topography/contour of the area is such that the housing site is located below the La Mesa Dam elevation and the filtration facilities. All the discharges from the housing site will, therefore, not affect the reservoir. The same is true with the existing subdivisions in the area which are even nearer the filtration area than the project is.

The MCMC has assured that all the mitigating measures to protect the environment and necessary drainage facilities have been incorporated in the housing project design.

We would like to emphasize that the construction of the units is being financed by the members through the combination of loans proceeds from accumulated Cola/AA, sale of other property; OFW remittances; and life-long family savings.

—ORLANDO C. HONDRADE,
administrator, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Katipunan Road,
Balara, Quezon City

MILITANTS rally against Charter change in Davao City.

Student leader voiced public anger vs GMA

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE letter "Society's failure" (PDI, 4/29/06) and Winnie Monsod's article "No role model." (PDI, 4/29/06)

The letter writer and Monsod should do well to remember that honesty, integrity and righteousness are positive Filipino values.

When Ma. Theresa Pangilinan heckled Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, she was merely expressing the public anger that GMA richly deserves for stealing our votes, taxes, rights and opportunities to progress. Also, let us remember that GMA doesn't deserve our respect for she has shamelessly violated our democracy by her tireless attempts to institutionalize tyranny and muzzle the media in our land.

While hailing democracy, she allows policemen to violently disperse rallies that are not to her liking, and she seems not to care that the number of murdered activists and journalists is rising fast.

Moreover, she is insensitive to the plight of poor Filipinos. She raised the value added tax by 20 percent, thus sending the prices of basic needs soaring. But when workers ask for a wage hike, she plays deaf. Yet, she's all out for Charter change which is, clearly, primarily meant to keep her in power.

Worse, she has been boasting that God wants her to stay in power as if the God of Truth and Justice wants His people to suffer more.

After all the things she had done to the Filipino nation, do Monsod and the writer of "Society's failure" expect sensible young people to respect GMA? Asking us to respect her is like asking us to adore dishonesty, greed for power, and insensitivity. GMA showcases the worst in our system. As such, she's the real "Society's failure." She's "no role model" for the youth or for anyone.

Instead of respecting her, we should all be heckling her in every way possible, as we have heckled Marcos and Estrada out of power. Thais and the Nepalese people heckled and Thaksin and Gyanendra, respectively, and in the end, they all achieved stability. We only have to heckle GMA out of power, and we would have better chances to achieve peace, progress and prosperity.

But for now, cheers to Ma. Theresa and the Filipino nation who loves her, and jeers to GMA's apologists!

—DAVID MICHAEL M. SAN JUAN,
convenor,
Gloria Stepdown Movement (GSM)-Bulacan, 451 Panasahan,
City of Malolos, Bulacan

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Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
2nd Floor, Los Baños Bldg
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Legazpi City
Telefax No. (052) 480-4182
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

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Arrest of PNP regional exec ordered

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—DIRECTOR GENERAL Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief, on Monday ordered the arrest of the chief of the Traffic Management Group in Central Luzon following an investigation into the latter's alleged anomalous activities and fraudulent entry in the PNP.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police director, said Lomibao directed the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Camp Crame to arrest Supt. Napoleon Cauyan.

Rafanan, interviewed by phone from Zambales, said the arrest has to be made after Cauyan on Saturday eluded the 304th provincial mobile group in Bataan.

Cauyan, who assumed the post on Feb. 6 this year, on Monday filed a petition for indirect contempt against Lomibao.

Also named respondents were Director Nicolas Pasinos, personnel and records management chief; Director Marcelo Ele Jr., investigation and detective management chief; Chief Supt. Errol Pan, TMG chief; and Senior Supt. Napoleon Estilles, head of the special investigation committee formed by Ele.

In the civil case filed at the regional trial court Branch 77 in Quezon City, Cauyan said the same court on March 22, 2005 ordered the PNP to "permanently desist from proceeding with the summary dismissal hearing or reinvestigation" of his case of alleged dishonesty and fraudulent entry in the PNP.

In the petition, he also said Lomibao informed then Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo that the "PNP was convinced that case should be finally put to rest by not pursuing any appeal with the Court of Appeals or filing any motion for reconsideration with the trial court."

In the copy of the May 2, 2005 letter to Benipayo, Lomibao said that the trial court "relied on the decision" of then PNP chief, Leandro Mendoza, who "exonerated" Cauyan from the administrative case.

"Hence, conducting another investigation on the same allegation would indeed be inconsistent with the principle of res judicata (finally putting the case to rest)," Lomibao wrote Benipayo.

Interviewed at the TMG regional office here where he has holed up since Sunday, Cauyan told the INQUIRER he would "resist" arrest because the investigation recommended by Ele "has no basis at all."

But in his May 15, 2005 order, Ele included several other cases. These were Cauyan's alleged anomalous release of four arrested members of a Bulacan-based car theft syndicate and a stolen vehicle.

Ele also mentioned Cauyan's pending criminal cases of grave threats, slight physical injuries, robbery and homicide.

In the interview, Cauyan said it was not his office but the TMG's Special Operations Group that was behind the March 6, 2006 operations in Bulacan.

"I was in Tarlac that same night supervising an operation where two of my men were wounded," Cauyan said.

Supt. Rolando Joaquin, TMG Bulacan chief, said the TMG-SOG did not coordinate the operations with the TMG regional or provincial office.

According to Cauyan, the cases that Ele had mentioned had already been dismissed.

CIDG troops were reported doing a search on Cauyan's house in Barangay Baseco in Mariveles, Bataan for stolen cars. Cauyan denied being involved in car theft as some Camp Olivas sources hinted.

He admitted he eluded the police's arrest on Saturday because he "felt that they were ready to kill me."

He said he suspected that "some police officials" were after his post. He did not name them. He also suspected that car theft syndicates might be behind the campaign to oust him. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

BRIG. GEN. Benjamin Dolorfino (center) visits an MNLF camp in Bitanag Panamao May 19 to facilitate a meeting of the MNLF group with representatives from the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The OIC came to Sulu to review the progress, or lack of it, of the 1986 peace agreement between the MNLF and the government. TROY MALCOLM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

BCDA vice president asks Japanese firm to recall executive

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—AN OFficial of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is pushing for the immediate recall of a Japanese contractor of the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway project.

Antonio Rex Chan, BCDA vice president for operations, said he is set to ask the Obayashi Corp. headquarters in Japan to recall Kazuhico Chabayashi, the project manager in charge of the Bataan segment of the expressway project.

The provincial government of Bataan had declared Chabayashi as persona non grata for his alleged refusal to comply with instructions of the provincial government leading to the collection of local taxes on the hauling of filling materials extracted from several quarry sites there.

Chan said the move to recall Chabayashi would "ease the ongoing tensions" between the Japanese contractor and provincial officials of Bataan.

He said the Japanese Embassy in Manila was "agitated and disturbed" by the misunderstanding between Bataan government officials and the Japanese executive.

The embassy requested the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) to help resolve the issue among Philippine government agencies in charge of the project, particularly with the BCDA and the Bataan provincial government.

The Neda has asked BCDA to address the embassy's concern with regard to the issue and has asked its officials led by retired Gen. Narciso Abaya to immediately act on the matter.

In their letter to the Neda, embassy officials raised their concerns about the Bataan officials' drastic move against Chabayashi, Chan said.

He quoted the embassy officials as saying that "Chabayashi did not commit a criminal act nor acted prejudicial to warrant such a declaration" of persona non grata.

In a letter to the Bataan provincial government, Chabayashi denied all the accusations against him.

Chan, however, noted that Chabayashi's recall would not in any way hamper the work schedules of the road project. "No one is indispensable as far as the project is concerned," Chan said.

Bataan officials were divided on the issue as the municipal mayors of Dinalupihan and Hermosa expressed misgivings over the resolution against Chabayashi.

OIC team wants Nur with them in Jeddah talks

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
and Dennis Jay C. Santos
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE INFLUENtial Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) want to see jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari sitting with them in a tripartite meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in July.

Sayed Kaseem El-Masry, adviser to OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, said the presence of Misuari in the meeting is very important given the former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader's crucial role in the implementation of the peace agreement which he signed with former President Fidel Ramos.

"We believe that Misuari plays a crucial role in the process. So we are expecting to see him during the tripartite meeting," El-Masry said.

"We are urging the Philippine government to expedite the release of Misuari for him to participate in the process in July," El-Masry added.

El-Masry and the entire OIC delegation expressed optimism that the government will consider their appeal.

This, after the government agreed to transfer Misuari, who is reportedly suffering from hypertension and respiratory tract infection, to a house close to St. Luke's Hospital.

"The government graciously responded to our request for his release and transfer for humanitarian ground," El-Masry said.

The release of Misuari, according to him, is the common concern of various civil society groups, most of them Muslim, that they were able to encounter in their mission. The OIC representatives flew to Sulu to meet with Ustadz Habier Malik, leader of what is now known as the MNLF Misuari Breakway Group.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said the government is currently considering the case of Misuari.

Cha-cha info bid brought to N. Ecija

CABANATUAN CITY—Two weeks of consultation and information drive on proposed Charter changes started Monday in Nueva Ecija.

Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson III said the first week of the activities would be held in government centers of the different towns and cities. In the second week, the activities will be conducted in the barangays.

He said the activities are being handled by government officials and private sector representatives who attended the orientation recently at the Nueva Ecija convention center.

Officials of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines attended the orientation-training as resource persons. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(PMO 12-2006)

(PMO Hiring of Financial Advisory Services for the Privatization of Philippine Postal Corporation)

1. The Privatization and Management Office ("PMO"), through its Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor ("FA") in connection with the privatization of Philippine Postal Corp. ("Philpost")

   The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is FIFTEEN MILLION PESOS (15M), to be paid by PMO and chargeable against the success fee which shall not exceed .75%

2. PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ("LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisory Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on or before 2 June 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. by hand, to PMO-BAC, and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of P10,000.00.

   Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 8 June 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.

3. The short list of prospective bidders shall not exceed five (5) FAs. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

   a. 30% General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principal and key staff, including relevant experience of the principal and key staff from previous employment;
   b. 30% Privatization experience of the FA;
   c. 20% Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project;
   d. 20% Dealings of the FA with the Philippine Government.

4. In accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 ("RA 9184"), bidding for the hiring of an FA will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the PMO. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification. The PMO-BAC shall evaluate bids using the *Quality-Cost Based Evaluation* procedure.

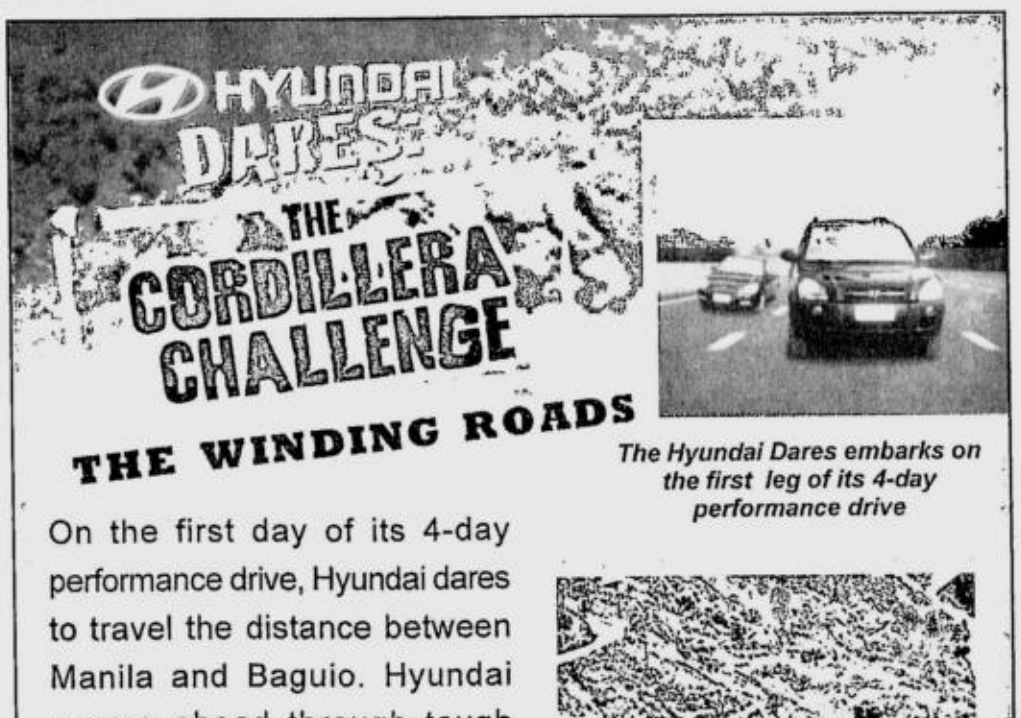
5. The eligibility and short listing requirements and the other bidding documents may be obtained from PMO-BAC at the address given below from Mondays to Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on 28 June 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/PMO-BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, to declare the bidding a failure, to annul the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
4th Floor, 104 Gamboa Street,
Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. Nos. 893-1640/893-7096/817-1103
Fax No. 893-2290
Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

(Sgd.) CRISANTA S. LEGASPI
Deputy Privatization Officer and Chairperson, PMO-BAC

(PDI - May 23 & 31, 2006)



THE WINDING ROADS

The Hyundai Dares embarks on the first leg of its 4-day performance drive

On the first day of its 4-day performance drive, Hyundai dares to travel the distance between Manila and Baguio. Hyundai surges ahead through tough hill territory with the intense torque power and superb maneuverability of its CRDi line up. The Getz, Matrix, Tucson, Accent and Starex, which comprised the dare team of vehicles, easily took control of the steep-angled, winding roads leading to the country's famed summer capital, Baguio City.

The treacherous zigzag roads of Baguio

Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge runs from May 23 to 26, 2006.

Dare to drive your way with the power of Hyundai.

Bicol public schools need 1,700 teachers

LEGAZPI CITY—OFFICIALS OF the Department of Education in Bicol said each classroom in the region could accommodate as many as 70 to 80 students to cope with the expected increase in enrollment when classes are expected to open June and the teaching force is short of 1,700 in the region.

"It is a perennial problem. It will result in bigger classes to maximize the manpower we have," said Valeriano Garcia Jr., DepEd regional planning unit chief.

Garcia pointed out that the shortage of teachers was mainly due to the scarcity of government funds to afford the hiring of more educators to address the increasing demand of students in the region.

"We lack classrooms. We lack books. We lack teachers. But the root of all these is the fact that our government is poor so we don't have a choice but to make our resources fit," Garcia said.

Enrollment is projected to increase by 2 to 3 percent this coming school year, both in the elementary and secondary levels, Celedonio Layon Jr., DepEd Bicol director, said in an interview with a local newspaper.

The actual enrollment figures in school year 2005-06 were 890,472 in the elementary level and 334,813 in high school, or a total of about 1.2 million enrollees in the different public schools in Bicol.

Last school year, the region lacked only 769 teachers, which was lower by almost half this year.

Layon said the DepEd's solution to the problem of lack of teachers was to make full use of every classroom to fit in 70 to 80 students.

"This is the way to accommodate all the impoverished students in public schools even if we lack classrooms and teachers," he added.

DepEd regional officials met on May 16 to discuss preparations for the opening of classes.

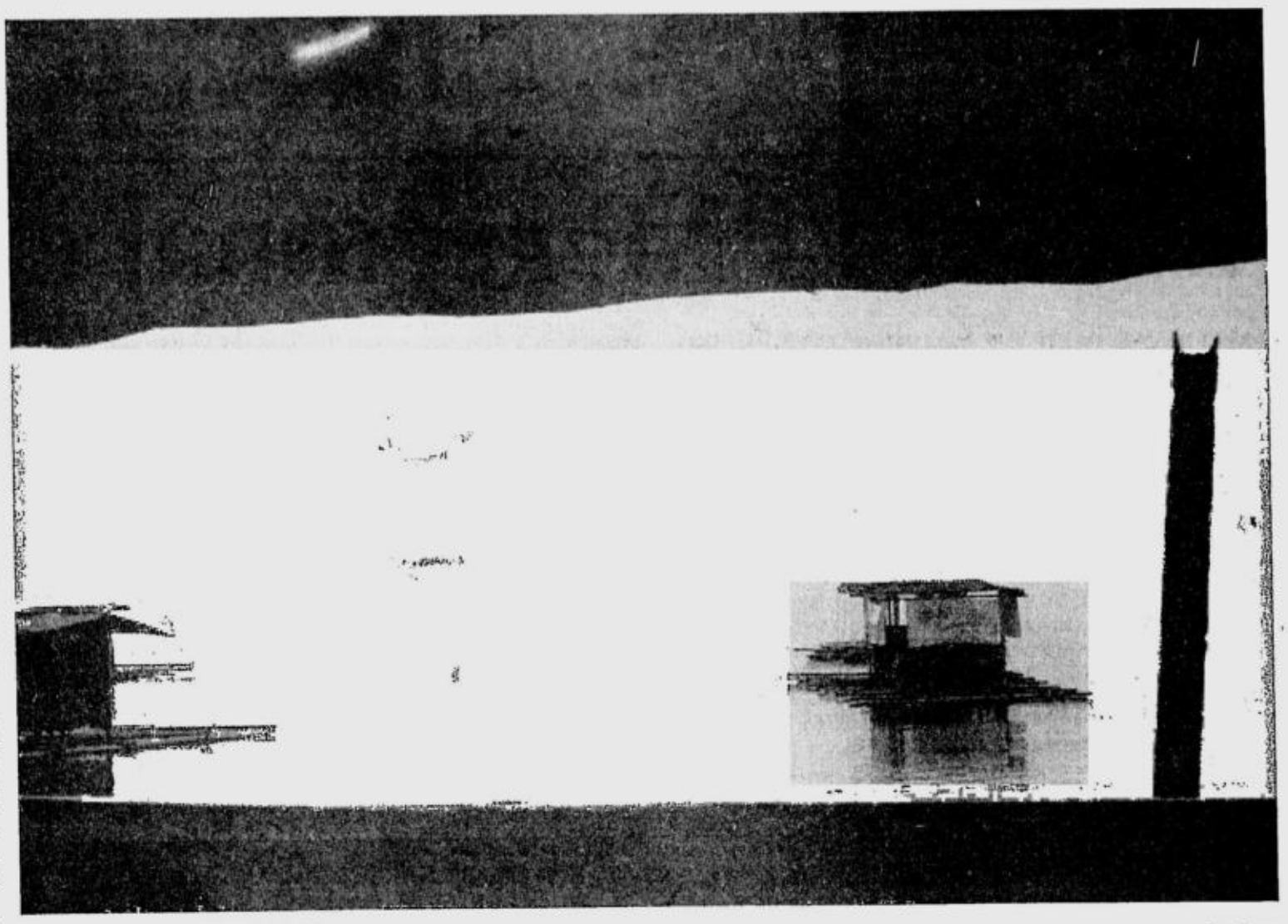
Also discussed in the meeting, the officials said, was the enforcement of a DepEd memorandum that strictly prohibited the non-acceptance of poor students during enrollment who cannot afford to pay school contributions and miscellaneous fees immediately.

Every year, students face the problem of increasing costs of education as schools increase tuition every time classes open.

In Central Luzon, at least 36 private colleges and universities are raising tuition and other fees by 3 to 20 percent for school year 2006-07, a report from the regional Commission on Higher Education on Tuesday showed.

Most of the approved increases went beyond the 7.6-percent national inflation rate set by the National Economic and Development Authority this year.

The report said 21 other schools were seeking an increase of 3 to 15 percent. The CHEd has disapproved only one application due to the late submission of requirements. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau with a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



MATABUNGKAY SUNSET RODEL ROTONI

The sunset is a sight to behold at a beach in Matabungkay Resort in Lian, Batangas, that started featuring makeshift rafts as a tourist attraction. The recent onslaught of tropical storm "Caloy," however, changed the scenery of the province, although temporarily.

1,000 families lose homes to fire in Cebu City

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—MORE THAN 1,000 FAMILIES lost their homes to a fire that hit a densely populated village here yesterday dawn.

SFO2 Felix Romero, investigator of the city fire department, said about 300 houses were destroyed in four sitios in Barangay Basak Pardo in the fire that broke out at 2:48 a.m.

The fire was put out at 4:23 a.m., or almost two hours later.

The sitios were Villa San Pedro Uno, Villa San Pedro Dos, Katangkungan and Ubos-Pundok.

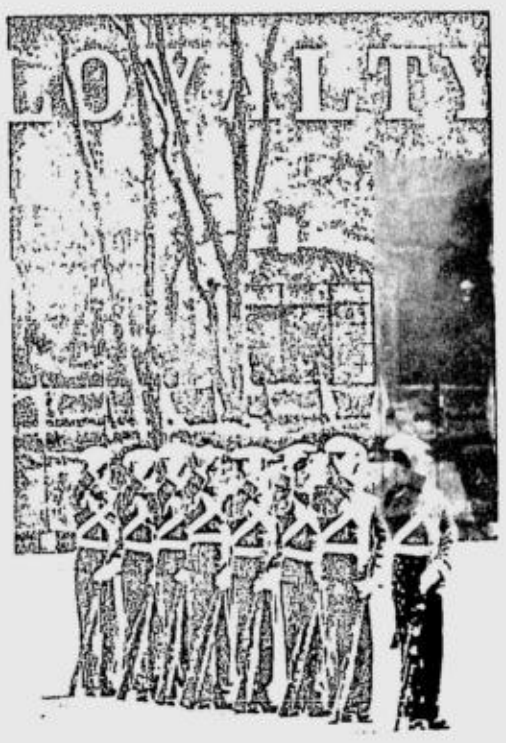
The fire started from the house of Kiking Margallo and his live-in partner Leny Vallejo. It quickly spread because most of the houses were made of light materials and immediately engulfed the neighborhood until it was put out at 4:23 a.m.

Arson was seen as the cause of the fire after a woman resident told Basak Pardo barangay chair Roberto Cabarrubias that she heard Vallejo and Margallo arguing at about 11 p.m. on Sunday.

The woman, identified as Kathleen Regala, reportedly heard one of the couple threatening to burn their house. About four hours later, the fire broke out from the couple's house.

Cabarrubias brought Regala to the fire investigator, so her story would be looked into.

He said Regala also claimed that she smelled kerosene before the fire started.



WITH or without the meningo scare, drills at the Philippine Military Academy are one of the scenes that visitors come to Baguio for. PDI PHOTO

Baguio wants maid registration done to check child labor

BAGUIO CITY—MIRIAM IS A 14-YEAR-old maid from Iloilo, who has nurtured a career of sorts working as a professional kasambahay (househelp) for Baguio's 300,000 households since she was 10.

But until this week, Miriam and about 12,000 under-aged transient workers remain invisible to the local government.

Officials of the summer capital are drafting an ordinance that would change that, by requiring all homes to register their domestic workers in a city listing.

Councilor Leandro Yangot, sponsor of the measure, said he wanted to regulate child domestic work, which he cited as "one of the oldest forms of child labor."

Housework is tolerated because children end up working safely within the confines of a home, although statistics indicate that even this form of child labor has resulted in cases of abuse, Yangot said.

The draft ordinance institutionalizes the city's "Kasambahay program," which will outline mandatory labor standards, decent employment and income, and access to social services.

It, however, also provides law enforcers their own data bank because of petty crimes attributed to domestic helpers.

"Of equal concern ... are employers of kasambahays who have equal rights to protection from their abuse and exploitation. There is a need to raise the consciousness [of] decision makers and the general public ... by challenging myths still surrounding the employment of adults and children in domestic work," the measure said.

The proposed ordinance will require mandatory yearly registrations, although the city will not collect processing fees from maids.

Barangays are held responsible for keeping track of maids.

The measure's primary goal is to "end domestic child labor, or the extreme forms of child domestic work [which is] considered among the worst forms of child labor," Yangot said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio wants ₱3M over ad on meningo

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUMMER CAPITAL wants a Manila-based drug trading firm to fork over P3 million in damages for an April advertisement published in a broadsheet that implied a link between Baguio City and meningococcemia.

Melchor Rabanes, city legal officer, filed the suit on May 17 against the Global Vaccine Express (Glovax) for superimposing landmark images of Kennon Road like the famed Lion's head, as well as the rice terraces in Battad, Ifugao, over an April 2 advertisement selling a vaccine against the fatal meningitis strain.

The city took Glovax to task for the following advertising pitch: "Going somewhere? Wherever you go viruses are waiting to welcome you, such as meningococcemia which can kill you in 24 hours."

The Ifugao provincial government has announced plans to file a similar damage suit against the drug distributor.

Glovax employees said the firm has no official statement at press time, when the INQUIRER reached their national office by telephone.

A criminal suit is also being prepared against Glovax, Rabanes told the INQUIRER, because of recent evidence suggesting that the government has not even allowed Glovax's meningococcemia vaccine to be distributed domestically.

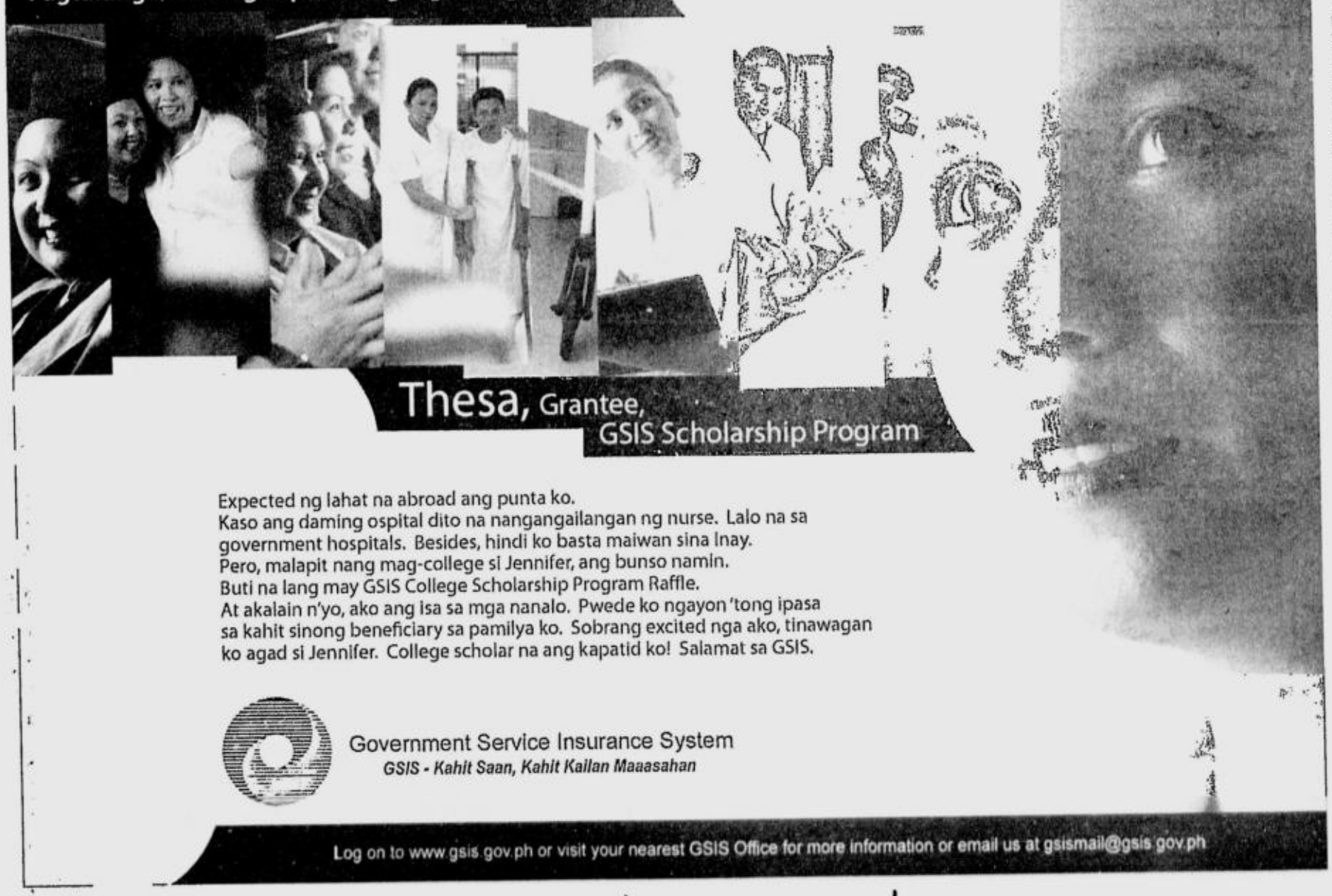
Rabanes cited a May 2 certification from the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration, which said that it had not approved Glovax's vaccine for Philippine distribution. The certification was issued by BFAD Director Leticia Barbara Guiterrez.

The city and parts of the Cordillera were struck by a meningococcemia outbreak, but fatalities were contained to a minimum under the supervision of the World Health Organization.

A different meningococcemia strain struck other parts of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao during the same period, but hysteria surrounding the Baguio outbreak cost the city its tourists throughout most of 2005. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

"Magiging scholar na ang kapatid ko!"

Pagtulungan Nating Tuparin Ang Mga Pangarap N'yo.



Thesa, Grantee, GSIS Scholarship Program

Expected ng lahat na abroad ang punta ko.
Kaso ang daming ospital dito na nangangailangan ng nurse. Lalo na sa government hospitals. Besides, hindi ko basta maiwan sina Inay.
Pero, malapit nang mag-college si Jennifer, ang bunso namin.
Buti na lang may GSIS College Scholarship Program Raffle.
At akalain n'yo, ako ang isa sa mga nanalo. Pwede ko ngayon 'tong ipasa sa kahit sinong beneficiary sa pamilya ko. Sobrang excited nga ako, tinawagan ko agad si Jennifer. College scholar na ang kapatid ko! Salamat sa GSIS.

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Baguio tells legislator: Spare 'wagwag' from ban

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment has petitioned Sen. Ralph Recto to spare the summer capital's tourist-drawing *wagwag* (secondhand bargain clothes) houses from a strengthened anti-smuggling measure that bars the importation of used clothes.

The council said the city's *wagwag* trade had gone through proper customs procedures, and should not be part of a general policy against importing used clothing.

"The second-hand clothes being sold by local retailers are not smuggled into the Philippines, as, in fact, proper custom fees are paid by these legitimate entrepreneurs," said the draft council resolution.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, proposed the bill seeking to increase restrictions on imports that have eroded trade in agriculture, as well as the manufacturing, petrochemical and automotive industries.

He earlier advised the Bureau of Customs to review old laws prohibiting the entry of used clothes, even when coursed through special economic zones or free ports, citing health issues and implications on smuggling laws.

Malacañang's adviser on transnational crimes is, in fact, pushing for new courses in the country's criminology schools that focus on modern industrial security.

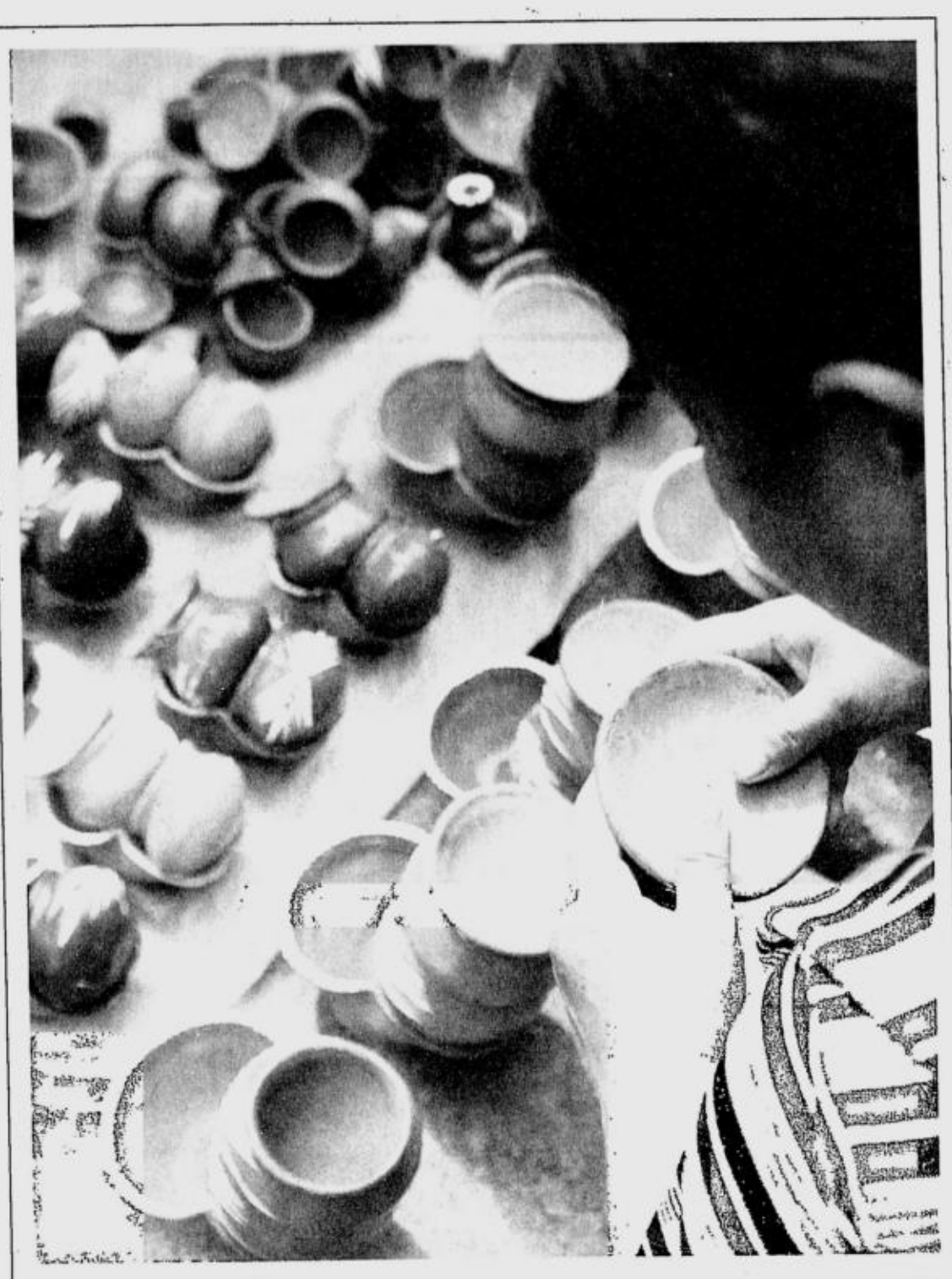
Florencio Fianza told the 17th National Convention on Criminology Education here last week that "the innocuous-sounding subject on exports" was actually the new frontier for terrorism.

He told criminologists and school administrators that the importation of "innocent-sounding materials," such as deep freezing chemicals for coffee grounds, or nickel powder that is already abundant in the country, are also necessary elements for building weapons of mass destruction or biological bombs.

Wagwag imports were items of suspicion in the early part of the decade due to rumors that the clothes carry either anthrax or the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus.

But the council's draft resolution objects to *wagwag*'s "unearned reputation."

"There is no scientific study to prove that used clothing is a potential health hazard and even [former] Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit reported that communicable diseases, such as meningococcemia [which struck in late 2004 and early 2005], cannot be acquired from buying used or second-hand clothes coming from disease-stricken countries," the resolution said.



MICRO ENTERPRISE ALANAH TORRALBA/CONTRIBUTOR
An entrepreneur sets up shop on a sidewalk in Obando, Bulacan to display small pots that she makes herself and which she sells for P30 to P60 each. Enterpreneurs like her get a lot of encouragement, but barely any support, from the government.

'Caloy' damage in Visayas reaches ₱200M

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—DAMAGE TO infrastructure and agriculture left by tropical storm "Caloy" in Eastern and Western Visayas reached close to P200 million.

The Office of the Civil Defense in Eastern Visayas (OCD) reported that P155.86 million worth of infrastructure and agriculture products were destroyed when Caloy hit the region on May 10.

The OCD in Western Visayas, on the other hand, estimated the damage in infrastructure in the region at P53.61 million and in agriculture, P9.34 million.

Adriano Fuego, OCD regional director, said that based on a consolidated report dated May 20, damage to infrastructure reached P139 million, while P16.86 million worth of crops, rice, corn and other agriculture products were destroyed.

Fuego said Leyte suffered the most damage in infrastructure facilities at P51 million. Damage to agriculture, mostly fruits, was placed at P25,090.

About P30 million worth of infrastructure facilities was damaged in Northern Samar.

Damage to agriculture in the province was estimated at P1.967 million.

In Southern Leyte, the region's most flood-prone province, damage to infrastructure was placed at P25 million.

Landslides and floods displaced 915 families or 4,893 persons in nine villages in Sogod town, Southern Leyte.

ROUNDUP

Suspected NPA rebel killed

CABANATUAN CITY—A suspected New People's Army rebel was killed in a 15-minute clash with Army soldiers in San Jose City on Sunday. Lt. Col. Jose Kakilala, commander of the 48th Infantry Battalion, identified the fatality as Andy Pawekan, said to be the political guide of a platoon of the Nueva Ecija guerrilla front under one Leopoldo Calusa. Fifteen rebels fled the encounter site at Sitio Maasip, Barangay Upper Tayabo. Kakilala said government soldiers recovered a .357 Magnum revolver, medicines and antigovernment documents from the site. Policemen who joined the blocking forces reported seizing at least three M-16 rifles from the fleeing rebels, he said.

Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ex-Hagibis eyes Sulu

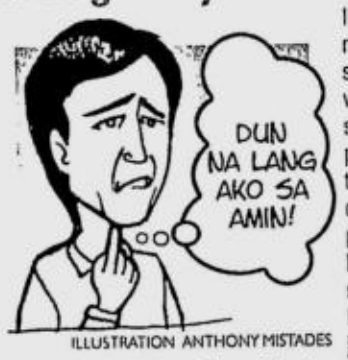
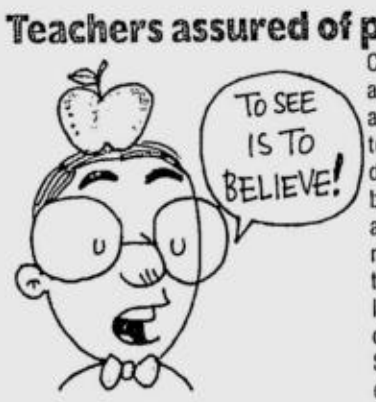


ILLUSTRATION ANTHONY MISTADES

ILAGAN, Isabela—After losing his mayoral bid in Marikina City in 2004, singer-actor Sonny Parsons said he would consider running for a congressional seat in his father's native province of Sulu in 2007. Parsons' father is a native of Luuk in the second district of Sulu. "I have been contemplating (of running) in my father's home. I have decided to stay there since [that political loss] in Marikina," Parsons, 49, told the INQUIRER. He joined an invitational shooting competition at the Isabela police office here. Parsons (real name: Jose Parsons Agliam Nabiula Jr.) lost to Marides Lourdes Fernando, wife of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, in the mayoral race there in 2004. He was a former Marikina councilor. Parsons, a member of the singing group Hagibis in the 1970s, has returned to the entertainment scene after he left politics.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Teachers assured of pay



COTABATO CITY—Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has assured public school teachers and education personnel in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that their salaries and other benefits will be paid on time. In past administrations, delayed salaries and nonremittance of payments for a certain period to the Government Service Insurance System were among the common complaints of teachers from Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Basilan. "We've seen these problems ... I don't want this to be repeated under my administration," said Ampatuan, adding that "the salaries and benefits of teachers must be paid on time." He warned that "those who will not follow my directive will be dealt with accordingly." Ampatuan said the money intended for the salaries and benefits of teachers would never be used for other purposes.

Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Peace Corps to train Muslims

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

COTABATO CITY—MEMBERS of the US Peace Corps started Monday a week-long training for Muslim teachers in "conflict-affected" areas in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The volunteer group's program specialist Cris Cayon said the training would be part of the Tudlo Mindanao, a program funded by the US Agency for International Development which aims to provide skills and knowledge to teachers from Maguindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Lanao del Sur, and from Marawi City. "Our volunteers will provide techniques and strategies in the context of Filipino culture. It is the only program in the Peace Corps world that lends technical assistance to communities without actually assigning volunteers to that area," Cayon said in a statement. The fourth Tudlo Mindanao training program since 2003 will be held in Cebu. The American volunteers will lead workshops on reading comprehension, computer technology, mathematics and science. More than 100 volunteers work nationwide in the fields of education, youth, small business and livelihood, and the environment.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Hotel sues over closure; Pagcor welcomes rap

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—LEGend International Resorts Ltd. (LIRL), a hotel and casino operator, has filed criminal charges against officials of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. following the closure of its casinos here.

"The Pagcor men were very rude and they forcibly entered the [Legenda] casino, and harassed our security staff and hotel guests," said Khoo Boo Boon, LIRL chief executive officer.

Lawyer Angeline Ifurung, LIRL vice president and legal head, filed cases of harassment and contempt against officials of the state gaming agency at the regional trial court in Olongapo City.

Ifurung questioned the order issued by Pagcor, saying a proper court should have served the closure order instead of Pagcor.

Pagcor revoked the LIRL's provisional authority to operate casinos inside the freeport after the firm refused to remit to Pagcor the guaranteed minimum amount of P5 million a month as provided for by a 2000 amendment to the company's license to operate.

Pagcor granted the provisional authority to LIRL on March 17, 2003.

Carlos Bautista Jr., Pagcor senior managing head, said the company's debt to Pagcor since March 2001 had reached more than P365 million, including interests.

SBMA police escorted Pagcor officials in Legenda casino and padlocked the building's main door. They also served the closure order against Grand Seasons Casino.

Bautista said Pagcor welcomed any charges that the LIRL would file against Pagcor and its employees.

"We are duty-bound to revoke the company's provisional authority and immediately stop all its casino operations," he said.

Jeers, cheers greet Vizcaya festival

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—THE province's week-long celebration of its 167th founding anniversary went in full swing on Saturday but was met with varied reactions from residents.

Organizers claimed success but other quarters noted that the event has lost its true spirit.

Since Friday, thousands of residents from Nueva Vizcaya's 15 towns have been trooping to the provincial capitol to watch the daily activities and exhibits in a trade fair showcasing each of the towns' best products.

Highlight of this year's Panagyaman Festival was Saturday's intertribal wedding festival, where the province's 15 indigenous groups gathered at the capitol site to stage the "*ipad*" or traditional marriage among members of the Ayangan tribe.

The ritual ended with the *tug-wa*, a traditional mode of feasting among the people of the Cordillera, according to Evelyn Liborio, president of the Nueva Vizcaya Tribal Council.

Led by Commissioner Corazon Espino of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the activity paid tribute to the 14 tribes comprising 45 percent of the province's residents: Ayangan, Bago, Bugkalot, Gaddang, Ibaloi, Itneg, Isinai, Iwak, Kalanguya, Kankanaey, Tuwali, Agtas, Kalinga and Bontoc.

ONE OF the features of the Panagyaman Festival, giant jackfruits, are displayed at a booth put up by Aritao town. VILLAMOR VISAYA JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Videokes

But some residents and women's groups criticized organizers over the proliferation of videoke bars within the capitol compound, the site of the celebration.

"This [event] is supposed to be an affair for the whole family. Whoever thought of having these (videoke bars) surround the children's playground may have lost their sense of morality or simply do not care about their children," said Orlando Velasquez, 47, a father of two.

Parents were concerned that the beer joints, many of which employ women dressed in skimpy outfits and sharing tables with male customers, were in full view of children playing at the park.

"Is this our idea of *panagyaman* (thanksgiving)? Is this what we came for to celebrate?" Velasquez asked.

"It's sad to see women being forced to engage in these activities for lack of job opportunities. These women may not at all be oblivious to the repercussions of being publicly seen, but who's to blame for an empty stomach?" said Trina Olivarez, spokesperson of the women's group Gabriela in Cagayan Valley.

Event organizers said having the videoke bars was intended to generate revenues to augment the P500,000 that was allotted for the 2006 festival.

Common practice

Board Member Glenn Afan, Panagyaman director general, said the presence of the videoke bars in the festival site was common practice in the annual event.

"The girls that you saw may just be [working there as] waitresses," he told the INQUIRER.

He denied that commercialism had dominated the event, saying the organizers were merely acknowledging the support extended by festival sponsors.

Rhoda Moreno, acting chair of the event's ways and means committee, said the festivity had collected P1.9 million from donations and stall rentals from the agro-industrial fair.

Figures on the amount collected from videoke bars, however, were still unavailable.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Villar richest, Flavier 'poorest' in Senate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

REAL ESTATE MAGNATE SEN. Manuel "Manny" Villar maintained his standing as the country's wealthiest lawmaker after reporting a networth of P760 million in 2005 or an increase of P140 million from the previous year.

As in the past, the Senate continued to be a millionaire's club with all but one of the 23 senators having net worths (assets minus liabilities) of not lower than P10 million.

Based on their 2005 Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Networth, only four senators made it to an exclusive circle of elite with networths of more than P100 million. They were senators Villar, Ralph Recto, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Ma. Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal.

Sen. Juan Flavier, who is serving his second and last term as senator, remained the "poorest" in the upper chamber although his networth rose by P1.4 million.

The SALN does not reflect the actual wealth of lawmakers because their assets are based on their acquisition values and not on their market values.

"I feel like a nickel among dimes," Flavier chuckled but explained that like his colleagues, his property was based on acquisition value.

Villar, a former fish vendor turned mega-entrepreneur, was lonely at the top with his mega-bucks. He declared P759,825,335 in assets and no liabilities. His 2004 networth was P620.7 million.

It was a joint SALN with his wife, Las Piñas City Rep. Cynthia Villar who also reigns supreme in the House of Representatives' millionaire's club since her election in 2001.

Though he's worth "only" P760 million on paper, Villar is believed to be a billionaire, not in pesos but in dollars.

A recent Asiaweek Magazine dubbed him "Asia's newest billionaire" reportedly worth $4 billion. This was based on the assets of C&P Homes, the flagship real estate company Villar founded in the '70s and now touted as the "biggest homebuilder in Southeast Asia."

Villar served as congressman from 1992 to 2001, became Speaker and run for the Senate in 2001. He is now Senate-president-in-waiting and is believed to be eyeing the presidency in 2010.

A far second to Villar is Recto, who reported a networth of P267.3 million (P278.5 million assets minus P11.1 million liabilities). Recto served as Batangas representative from 1992-1995 and 2001-2004. He is the husband of actress and Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos.

In third place is Magsaysay, son and namesake of the late President Ramon Magsaysay, who has a networth of P150.8 million. Madrigal ranked fourth with P114.1 million. A neophyte senator, she is the granddaughter of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos and former Sen. Vicente Madrigal.

The other senators and their networths are: 5. Actor Ramon "Bong" Revilla - P99.4 million; 6. Juan Ponce Enrile - P97 million; 7. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada - P81.5 million; 8. Mar Roxas - P75.7 million; 9. Pia Cayetano - P75.3 million; 10. Miriam Defensor-Santiago - P72 million

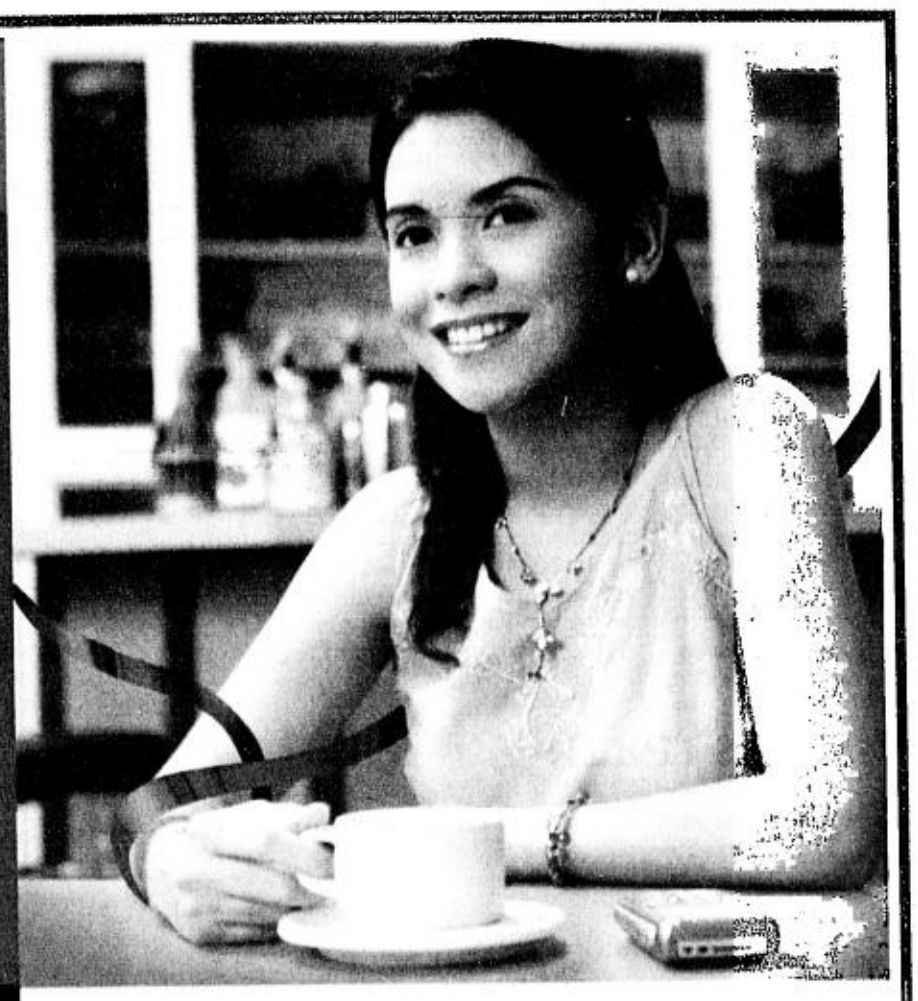
11. Sergio Osmeña III - P63.2 million; 12. Edgardo Angara - P36.2 million; 13. Luisa Ejercito-Estrada - P32.6 million; 14. Rodolfo Biazon - P25.4 Million; 15. Panfilo Lacson - P25 million; 16. Richard Gordon - P24.9 million; 17. Senate President Franklin Drilon - P21 million; 18. Francis Pangilinan - P14.3 million; 19. Joker Arroyo - P11 million; 20. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. - P10.9 million; 21. Manuel "Lito" Lapid - P10.9 million; 22. Alfredo Lim - P10.8 million; 23. Flavier - P3.4 million.

Loi Estrada, wife of detained President Joseph Estrada who is on trial for allegedly plundering P4 billion, has the biggest liabilities worth P169.1 million. "I have a lot of mortgages," she quipped.

Roxas, scion of the Araneta-Roxas clan, had the second biggest liabilities worth P61 million, followed by Gordon and Recto.

Enrile, Marcos' former defense minister, declared real estate properties worth P1,000 as part of his P97 million assets. He had no liabilities. He said he bought his property in Cagayan "a long, long time ago."

"Tulog o gising, ayoko na maging praning."



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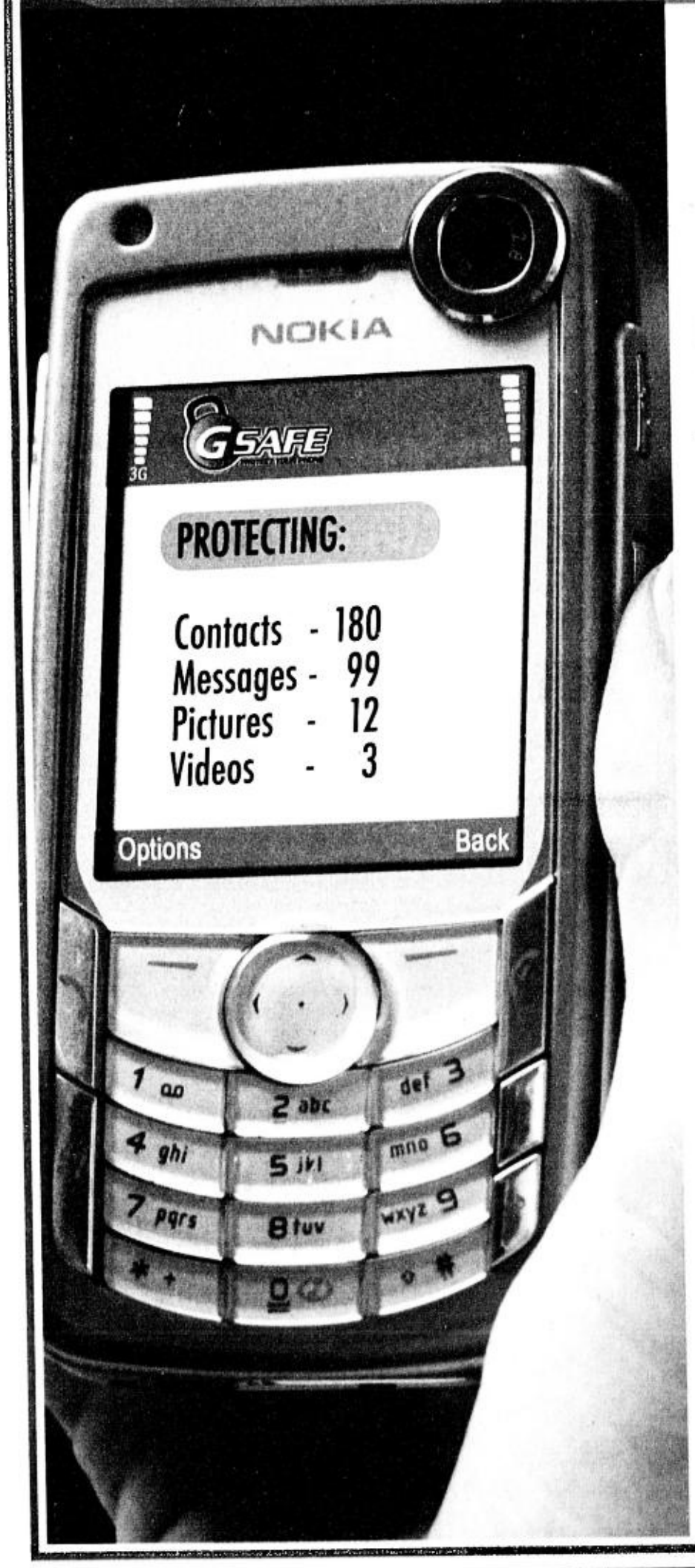

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2 cops, 2 ex-PAF pilots nabbed for drugs

By Margaux C. Ortiz

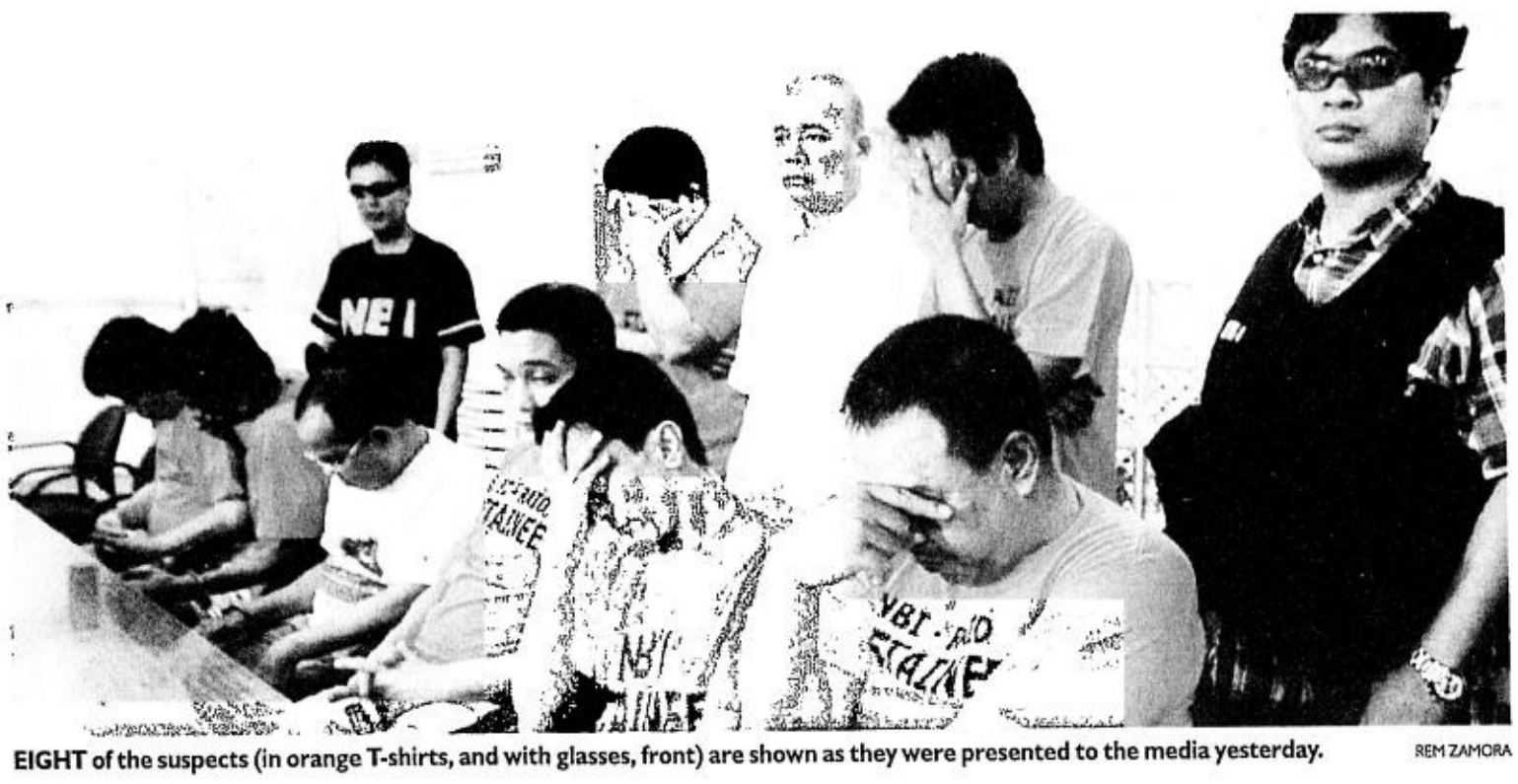
TEN PEOPLE, INCLUDING TWO policemen and two retired Philippine Air Force pilots—one of them a former lieutenant colonel who used to be a squadron commander—were presented to media yesterday following their arrest by authorities last week for illegal drug-related cases.

Eight of the suspects were caught by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation while sniffing shabu the other Tuesday in a house allegedly used as a drug den inside Merville Park Subdivision in Parañaque City.

NBI acting Director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspects as Gregorio Santiago, 43, the owner of the alleged drug den located at 1 Israel Street; Chief Insp. Robert Mendoza Gabor, 48, assigned at the Philippine National Police Holding Center in Camp Crame; his brother Josefino Gabor, 45, a former Air Force pilot assigned to the 15th Strike Wing stationed in Sangley, Cavite; and retired Lt. Col. Alex Hernandez, 45, who was formerly the squadron commander of the helicopter wing in Villamor Airbase.

Also arrested were Wenceslao Mendoza Jr., Ronald Nunez, Jeremias Pedrosa and Solaiman Lumanggal.

Mantaring said the suspects, who were caught in the act of sniffing methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), all tested positive for the drug.



EIGHT of the suspects (in orange T-shirts, and with glasses, front) are shown as they were presented to the media yesterday. REM ZAMORA

The Manila Police District, on the other hand, announced the arrest yesterday of PO1 Dexter Arciaga, 26, of the MPD Anti-Illegal Drugs Unit and his companion Rose Ann Antonio, 20.

MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said the two were nabbed on Sunday on Gen. Geronimo Street in Sampaloc, Manila, after Station 4 chief Jose Asayo received information about their alleged illegal activities. Police said they seized four sachets containing suspected shabu from the pair.

NBI Reaction, Arrest and Interdiction Division (RAID) chief Roel Bolivar said his unit had received information that Santiago's house was allegedly being used as a drug den.

"Our surveillance cameras showed that suspected drug users would often go in and out of the house for shabu sessions," Bolivar said in a press conference yesterday.

NBI and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) operatives conducted the raid last May 16. They seized 10.8 grams of shabu, valium tablets, drug paraphernalia, a list of drug deals, and a live hand grenade.

"We have recommended that administrative charges be filed against Roberto Gabor, who is still in the active service," Mantaring said.

Santiago, speaking for the group, admitted that he and his friends used drugs on a regular basis.

Charges for violation of Republic Act 8294 (Illegal Possession of Explosives) and Section 6 (Maintenance of a Drug Den) and Section 11 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs) of Republic Act 9165 or Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 have been filed against Santiago.

Mantaring said the rest of the suspects face charges for violation of Section 7 (Visitors of a Drug Den), Section 15 (Use of Dangerous Drugs) and Section 12 (Possession of Drug Paraphernalia) of RA 9165.

Did killer shoot the wrong target?

By DJ Yap and Melissa de Quiros

THE BROTHER OF A DEPARTment of Environment and Natural Resources employee was shot dead yesterday in Quezon City, in what police suspect was a case of mistaken identity.

Johnny Danganan, 32, was gunned down on board a Toyota Lite-Ace owned by his brother Samuel Danganan, who works for the DENR's anti-illegal logging task force.

Johnny was cruising on Villareal Street and slowly turning toward Quirino Highway in Gulod, Novaliches, at 7:30 a.m. yesterday, when a man appeared on his left and shot him with a .45 caliber pistol, police said.

'Work-related'

Investigator PO2 Edwin de la Cruz said the man probably intended to kill Samuel over a work-related issue, but mistook Johnny for his target, since the victim was using his brother's vehicle.

The gunman escaped while Johnny was rushed to the Novaliches General Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

Big Man gets back

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM, "ISUMbong Mo! (Tulfo Brothers)," was launched last Saturday, May 20, on RPN 9. The program, hosted by my brothers Raffy and Erwin and myself, replaced "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo!" hosted by me alone.

We've received many text messages and calls saying the show's first episode was very promising. Some said it was a first on Philippine TV since three brothers, all in media, are in one show. "Isumbong" is a public service show that aims to help aggrieved citizens get justice. But the first episode was nearly cancelled before its scheduled airing on the government-sequestered station.

Somebody very influential and very vindictive—let's call him Big Man—wanted the show cancelled. He pulled rank, trying to have the show's first episode replaced with a canned program. To its credit, the RPN Board headed by its chair, Secretary for Mass Media Group Cerge Remonde, stood up to him and aired the show. Now, Remonde is in danger of losing his job. The Big Man was quoted by an inside source as having told Remonde: "If you don't follow my instructions, you had better look for another job." Other RPN officials, like president and CEO Mia Concio, might also lose their jobs.

My source quoted Remonde as telling the Big Man: "Go ahead, Sir, let's get this over with. I can't cancel the show because we could be sued if we do it."

I was in the province last Saturday and I felt like crying when I heard about the Big Man's last-minute order. What had I done to merit his rage? We used to be very good friends, until I followed the dictates of my profession. Until last Saturday, I tried to understand his *sama ng loob* (hard feelings) for exposing the reported smuggling activities of his alleged girlfriend and her brother. But he should also understand that I'm a journalist motivated by public interest. As a result of my exposé, the Bureau of Customs increased its collections by leaps and bounds. Nobody had the guts to tell the Big Man that the girl and her brother were using his name for their illegal activities.

I thought that this episode would somehow be forgotten with the passing of time. Friends, like lovers, quarrel sometimes, but they kiss and make up afterward. Not this friend. He's vindictive and he uses his influence to get back at people who have hurt him.

Days after I wrote that exposé, he approached the owner of a radio station where I had my daily public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," and asked him to fire me. The owner, a mutual friend, told him he couldn't do it because I was under contract and I hadn't committed any infraction. The Big Man then went to RPN 9 where I was about to sign my "Isumbong" contract under a co-production scheme that would make me a talent. I would share in the production costs, like paying the other talents, but I would not pay for airtime. The Big Man ordered the station to make me pay for airtime, as well as all the production costs. Where can you find a public service show, that helps people get justice, paying for airtime? The Big Man thought the onerous scheme would deter us from going on with the show. But Erwin, Raffy and I agreed to the scheme since we consider it our mission to help others.

I hope the Big Man would leave me alone. A cornered animal can do more harm.

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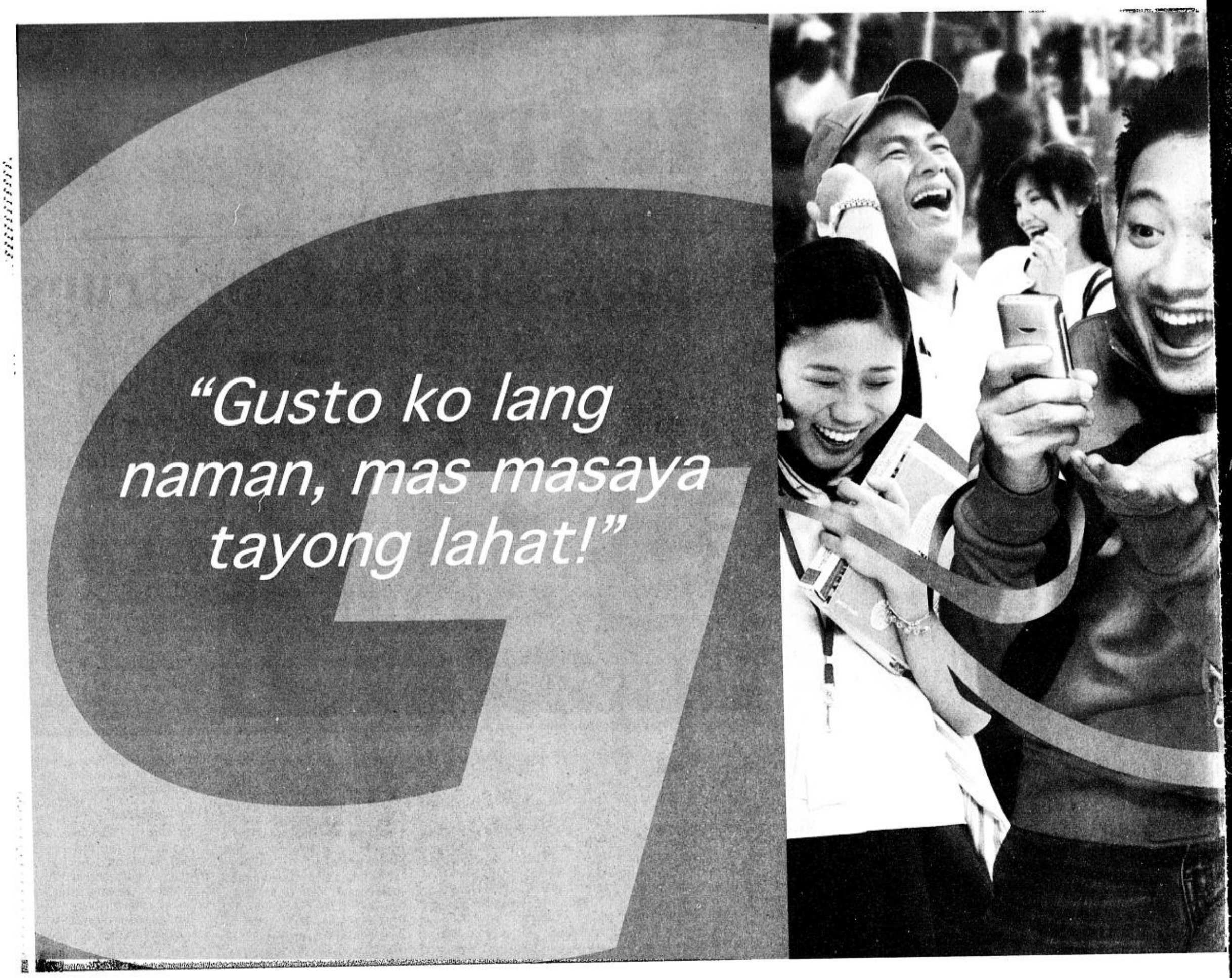

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Thaksin considers return as full-time Thai premier

BANGKOK—THAKSIN SHINAWATRA MAY RETURN AS THAILAND'S full-time prime minister, ending a break from politics he took last month amid street protests, the government spokesperson said Monday.

Thaksin resumed some of his major duties Monday, including trying to tackle a bloody Muslim insurgency in the country's southern provinces. Spokesperson Suraphong Suebwonglee said Thaksin might stage a full comeback by asking the Cabinet to revoke a resolution that appointed Chitchai Wannasathit as caretaker prime minister.

A return by Thaksin would renew tensions and probable street demonstrations by the People's Alliance for Democracy, a coalition that orchestrated earlier protests. Opposition political parties have not yet outlined how they would react to a comeback.

"Everyone is confused by Thaksin's action. He is playing with the country like a kid with a toy. One day he wants to be prime minister and the next he doesn't want to. I would like to warn Thaksin that the country is not a toy for him to play around with," said Chuan Leekpai, a former prime minister and chief adviser to the opposition Democrat Party.

An alliance spokesperson, Suriyasai Katasila, said more street protests would be held, but only after celebrations next month marking the 60th anniversary on the throne of the country's revered monarch.

Thailand has had a caretaker government and no Parliament since April 2 general elections were annulled by the Constitutional Court.

"There are a lot of problems. I will have to tackle them because it will be a long time until a new election is held," Thaksin told reporters over the weekend.

The embattled Election Commission on Monday proposed a further delay in plans for new elections until Oct. 29, after Muslim officials said the earlier date, Oct. 22, conflicted with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

But neither date may hold since the commissioners are under pressure from the country's top courts as well as opposition political parties to step down over claims that they unfairly favor Thaksin's government.

In an unrelated case, the four commissioners appeared Monday before a criminal court in southern Thailand to face charges of abuse of duty. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. *AP*

THAILAND'S Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra waves to the media at the Government House in Bangkok May 22. REUTERS

Thousands march worldwide against child hunger

ROME—FROM ROME TO AUCKland to Nairobi, hundreds of thousands of people let their feet do the talking on Sunday in the UN World Food Program's (WFP) annual march against child hunger.

Walkers in more than 100 countries in 24 time zones across the world set off at 10 a.m. local time in the "Fight Hunger: Walk the World" demonstration, aimed at raising funds for the WFP.

The first protesters set off in Auckland, capital of New Zealand, on the five-kilometer walk, which was followed by marchers in the capitals of Indonesia, Bangladesh and Liberia, and on the island of Samoa.

In Italy, where the WFP is based, around a dozen towns were taking part in the event, from Catania in Sicily to Turin in the north.

A rally in the Italian capital on Sunday morning drew thousands, most of them children and young people, members of sports organizations and WFP employees, the organization's spokesperson Vichi De Marchi told AFP.

Pope Benedict XVI hailed the initiative during Sunday prayers on St Peter's Square, and expressed the hope that "thanks to everyone's contributions we will be able to combat the plague of hunger that still afflicts humanity."

In central Moscow, the protest drew mostly teenagers wearing blue berets and T-shirts that read: "Join us: help feed hungry children in the world's schools," independent radio station Echo Moscow reported.

"This will prove that Russia, which not long ago was a recipient of international aid, supports efforts to help people dying of hunger around the world," said march organizer Dmitri Pisarev, quoted by the RIA-Novosti news agency.

Some 4,000 people including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres turned out for a 10-km walk around Portugal's capital, Lisbon. Guterres said after the march it was "intolerable" that the WFP did not have sufficient funds to fight hunger.

In the Czech capital Prague, organizers said the march would raise money for food programs in Tanzania and Afghanistan. In the Central Asian country alone one out of four children die before reaching the age of five, Czech senator and journalist Jaromir Stetina told the CTK news agency.

In Tanzania, thousands including a large number of schoolchildren gathered at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro carrying placards reading, "Fight Hunger: Walk the World," WFP spokesperson Heather Hill told AFP.

A group of athletes who had completed their ascent of Kilimanjaro the previous day to mark the event also joined the march, as did Tanzanian Prime Minister Edward Lowassa.

And in Asia WFP employee Mark Squirrel marked the event on Thursday by scaling Everest.

Other Walk the World events were held in Madrid, New Delhi, Islamabad, Amman, Kinshasa and in several other African countries.

The walk the world event "is about creating a movement to end child hunger," said Arlene Mitchell, director of the walk for WFP, in a statement.

"By engaging citizens from rich and poor countries alike, governments worldwide will heed the call, and will do more to end child hunger," said Mitchell.

The event's organizers expected more than 700,000 people to take part worldwide. About 100,000 children were expected to take part in sub-Saharan Africa alone, many of them beneficiaries of WFP programs.

The WFP says some 300 million children across the world suffer from chronic starvation, a figure it aims to cut in half by 2015.

Ramin Rasirasme, a spokesperson for the organization, said it hoped to raise $5 million from the event. *AFP*

THOUSANDS of internal displaced people from the Pader district of Northern Uganda participate May 21 in the UN World Food Program's (WFP) "Fight Hunger: Walk the World" march against child hunger, aimed at raising funds for the WFP. AFP

US won't guarantee security of Iran

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States is not offering security guarantees to Iran to end its nuclear program, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Sunday.

"Security assurances are not on the table," Rice said ahead of new international talks this week about the Iran diplomatic crisis.

"It's obvious that in addition to the nuclear issue, we have other issues with Iran. We have a state in Iran that is devoted to the destruction of Israel. We have a state in Iran that meddles in the peace process" in the Middle East, Rice said on Fox News television.

Britain, France and Germany have drawn up a package aiming to persuade Iran to end its uranium enrichment, which the United States and its allies believe hides an effort to build a nuclear bomb.

The European proposals are to be discussed at a meeting in London on Wednesday of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, along with Germany.

Iran is also to be a key issue in talks when Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert makes his first official visit to Washington this week.

Olmert told CNN television on Sunday that he believes Iran is just a few months, rather than a few years, from acquiring the technological expertise needed to build a nuclear bomb.

According to media reports, the European trio have asked Washington to provide guarantees that no security threat would be made to the Iranian government. Rice strongly denied such a request had been made.

"First of all, let me just set the record straight. We haven't been asked to provide security assurances to Iran," she said. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

WHO chief dies after emergency operation

SEOUL—Lee Jong-wook, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO); died Monday after undergoing emergency brain surgery, the South Korean foreign ministry said. "Lee died after undergoing an operation in Geneva," said ministry spokesperson Choi Soung-Ah. Lee, 61, was rushed to the hospital Saturday and underwent an emergency operation on Sunday to remove a blood clot in the brain. He died at 8 a.m., Yonhap news agency said. Lee, who was elected to lead the UN health agency in 2003 for a five year term, is survived by his wife Reiko Karabuki and a son, Yonhap said. Born in Seoul, Lee received a medical degree from Seoul National University and a master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii. *AFP*

7 dead, 22 hurt in Indian Kashmir attack

SRINAGAR, India—At least seven people died and 22 were injured as Islamic militants attacked hundreds at a political event in Indian Kashmir's summer capital ahead of peace talks on the region, police said. Police said the firing, which had pinned down dozens of people in a park for almost three hours, stopped after they killed two militants who had attacked with rifles and hand-grenades. "So far, we have reports that four civilians, two attackers and a policeman have died in this raid," a senior police officer said, adding that at least 22 people had been admitted to local hospitals with bullet wounds. Two Islamic groups, al Mansurain and Lashkar-e-Toiba, claimed responsibility for the attack. *AFP*

Kuwait's emir dissolves parliament

KUWAIT CITY—Kuwait's emir dissolved parliament and called for new elections on June 29, saying he was forced to act to safeguard security and national unity amid a deep political crisis. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah announced the move in a bid to end a row over an election reform bill that opposition MPs complained did not do enough to prevent vote fraud in the oil-rich Gulf state. Sheikh Sabah, 76, took power in January only after a row over succession in Kuwait following the death of the previous emir. "Pursuant to decree 146 for the year 2006 parliament will be dissolved," read the decree carried by the official KUNA news agency. "Voters are invited to elect new members of parliament on Thursday June 29, 2006." *AFP*

Montenegro votes to end union with Serbia

PODGORICA, Serbia-Montenegro—Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic on Monday proclaimed victory for the proindependence camp following a referendum vote on splitting from Serbia. "Let me tell you that tonight, by the decision of the people of Montenegro, an independent Montenegro has been renewed," Djukanovic told his supporters. Djukanovic said that 55.5 percent of those who have voted in Sunday's referendum "gave support to a renewal of the independent state of Montenegro." That result is only marginally above the 55 percent majority required for the referendum decision to be valid. Djukanovic said that, with 99 percent of all votes counted, the "yes" camp had garnered 45,000 more votes than the rival bloc supporting the union with Serbia. *AFP*

Verdict on Ethiopia's ex-dictator due

ADDIS ABABA—MENGISTU HAILE Mariam, accused of a 17-year reign of terror in Ethiopia, faces a long-awaited genocide verdict on Tuesday in a sign of Africa's new resolve to bring ex-leaders to account for past abuses.

The former Marxist ruler, now nearing 70 and living in comfortable exile in Zimbabwe, is accused of killing tens of thousands of people after toppling Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

In the most notorious purge, the Red Terror, thousands of suspected opponents were rounded up, executed by garroting or shooting, then tossed into the streets.

Mengistu fled to Zimbabwe in 1991 but has been the subject of a 12-year trial in absentia in Addis Ababa.

The prosecution blames the lengthy case on the complexity of the proceedings but Ethiopians hoping to close the door on a painful era indicated they weren't troubled by the delay.

"I know that even if Mengistu and all his supporters are sentenced to death, there is no way I will get my son back," said Abebe Girma, 60, a pensioner whose son was accused of being an opposition supporter and executed in the 1977-78 Red Terror.

"Just the same, I want justice to be done."

Most of Africa's many former strongman rulers in the decades since independence have avoided facing legal charges. But activists believe the continent is finally strengthening its resolve to tackle a litany of past abuses.

Liberian warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor became the first African leader last month to stand before an international court in Sierra Leone, where he awaits trial on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

And in June, an African Union summit is to decide whether to extradite former Chad President Hissene Habre to Belgium to face charges of mass murder and torture during his 1982-1990 rule.

The International Criminal Court is also probing war crimes in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Reuters*

FBI accuses congressman of taking bribes

WASHINGTON—THE FBI CHARGED on Sunday that Rep. William J. Jefferson, a Louisiana Democrat, was paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes by a Kentucky businessman and stashed $90,000 of that money in his home freezer in Washington.

The allegations appeared in court documents that were made public only hours after a team of 15 FBI agents completed an unusual all-night search of Jefferson's congressional offices. FBI officials said the raid was the first the agency had ever conducted of a lawmaker's office on Capitol Hill.

The search warrant and other documents, which were unsealed in US District Court in Washington, accused the eight-term lawmaker of accepting bribes to help a small technology company win contracts with federal agencies and with businesses and governments in Nigeria and Ghana. Jefferson is one of several members of Congress who are under scrutiny by the justice department on corruption charges.

JEFFERSON AP

While the outline of the case against Jefferson has been known for months, the court papers released on Sunday were the first in which he was linked by name to the bribery charges and to iGate Inc., the Louisville company that sought his help in winning contracts for its high-technology products.

The documents revealed that many of Jefferson's contacts with people involved in the bribery scheme were secretly taped, including a videotaped meeting last July at which the lawmaker received a briefcase containing $100,000 in $100 bills.

The FBI said that $90,000 of that money was found in a raid on Jefferson's Washington home last August, divided into $10,000 increments and then placed in "various frozen food containers and wrapped in aluminum foil." The court documents said the money was supposed to be used to pay a middleman—his name is blacked out in the court papers—who might help Jefferson secure contracts in Nigeria, an oil-rich nation plagued by government corruption.

At an impassioned news conference last week in New Orleans, Jefferson insisted that he was innocent of wrongdoing and would not resign from the House, even if indicted. He said prosecutors had chosen "to view the facts in the worst possible light." *New York Times News Service*

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SPORTS

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So sparks romp over Mauritius

By Roy Luarca

TURIN, ITALY— GRANDmaster Rogelio Antonio Jr. completed what Fide Master Wesley So started as the Philippine men's team blanked Mauritius, 4-0, in the first round of the 37th Chess Olympiad at the Olympic Village here Sunday.

The 12-year-old So, youngest ever Filipino Olympian, pounced on Patrick Marie's faulty opening to win with the black pieces in just 18 moves of a Sicilian on board 4.

Handling white, Antonio took 42 moves to dispose of Roy Phillips in a Modern opening on board 1 and preserve his clean slate in the last two editions of the biennial meet.

In-between, FM Oliver Dimakiling and national master Darwin Laylo trounced Deevarajan Chinnasamy and Patrick Li Ying, on board 2 and 3, respectively, enabling the 35th-seeded Filipinos to share the early lead in the record 146-team men's field.

GRANDMASTER Rogelio Antonio takes the longest to win his match, beating Roy Philips of Mauritius in 42 moves of a Modern opening.

The 25-year-old Dimakiling beat Chinnasamy in 25 moves of a Dutch while two-time RP cham-Laylo, also 25, bested Li Ying in 24 moves of a Scandinavian defense.

"Perfect start," said team captain Sammy Estimo. "Just what we need to boost the players' morale."

It was the other way around for the women's team, however.

The 60th-ranked Filipinas bowed to the No. 8 Germans, 0.5-2.5, with only rookie Sherily Cua managing a draw with Woman GM Vera Juergens on board 3.

The Filipinos, bidding to better their 19th place effort in the 2004 Calvia Olympiad, tackle No. 63 Luxembourg in the second round Monday (9 p.m. in Manila).

Against Luxembourg, 4-0 conqueror of Mozambique, Estimo will be fielding the young Turks led by GM Mark Paragua.

With GM Eugene Torre, the regular board 2 player, and Antonio, the board 3 player, taking a rest, Laylo moves up to board 2. Dimakiling will be on board 3 and So keeps board 4.

Woman IM-elect Sherrie Joy Lomibao was one pawn up but blundered during the time scramble to yield to German IM Gersinska Ketine Kachini.

Perena, on the other hand, dropped a drawish position in a rook-bishop against rook ending.

Women's team captain Cesar Caturla said he'll be fielding back Lomibao on board 1, elevate Cua to board 2 and let WIM Beverly Mendoza handle board 3 against 81st Ireland, which bowed to Moldova, 2.5-0.5.

The day's shocker was Morocco's 3-1 win over second-ranked India, which missed the services of GM Viswanathan Anand, the world's No. 2.

Top favorite Russia and 33 other countries, including Vietnam, also posted perfect 4.0 points in the men's division. Defending champion Ukraine and China were among those with 3.5 points.

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SEA Games champs back in RP Open badminton

WONG PEI TTY AND CHIN EEI HUI RETURN TO the scene of their triumph in the last Southeast Asian Games here as spearheads of Malaysia's campaign in the $120,000 Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open Badminton Championships presented by PLDT Business Solutions which reels off tomorrow at the PhilSports Arena.

The top-seeded pair of Tty and Hui beat the Indon pair of Jo Novita and Greysia Polii to capture the women's doubles gold medal in last December's SEA Games at the PhilSports.

Their main rivals are the second ranked pair of Saralee Thoungthongkan and Sathinee Chankachang-won of Thailand, Duang-Anong Arunkesorn and Kunchala Vorawichitchaikul, also of Thailand, and Novita and Polii, who will be out for revenge in the event sponsored by Bingo Bonanza, JVC, PLDT and SMART.

Also in the fold are the two local tandems of Rachel Guerrero-Raquel Guerrero and Paula Chan-Therine Chan. The 20-team field that also includes the pair of Filipina Kennie Asuncion and Wanglili of Indonesia.

Games will start at 2 p.m. and will be telecast on IBC-13.

The top players in the blue-ribbon event, the first four-star IBF-sanctioned tournament to be played here, will meet the press at 11 a.m. today.

Heading the cast is top seed Xu Huaiwen of Germany, the world No. 4 in ladies singles; Hafiz Hashim of Malaysia and Hong Kong's Wei Ng, the top two ranked players in the men's singles, the pairs of Mohd Tazari-Woon Fui Lin of Malaysia and Sudket Prapakamol-Patapol Ngernsrisuk of Thailand and the top seeded Thai squads in the mixed doubles—Songpol Anukritayawan-Vorawichitchaikul and Sudket Prapakamol-Thoungthongkan.

Meanwhile, tickets are available at all Ticketworld outlets and are packaged in the following categories: May 24-26 Category 1 (P200); Category 2 (P150); Category 3 (P100); Category 4 (P50); Gallery (P10); May 27-28 Category 1 (P500); Category 2 (P350); Category 3 (P250); Category 4 (P150); Gallery (P20).

Tickets purchased earlier will still be honored on the new dates, according to IMG. For details call 891-9999.

The event is backed by Jam 88.3, 99.5 RT, Magic 89.9, 103.5 K-Lite, Wave 89.1, Snickers, Toby's Sports, Inquirer Badminton, The Star, Badminton Asia, Fossil Watches, Bacchus Energy Drink, Accel, Yonex Sunrise, IBC-13, Crowne Plaza, the official hotel, and Solar Sports, the official TV partner.

Rain or Shine, Granny Goose eye semifinals

ARMED WITH TWICE-TO-BEAT INCENTIVES, Rain or Shine and Granny Goose try to complete the semifinal cast with victories over separate rivals in the PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

The Elasto Painters will try to make it two-in-a-row over the Magnolia Spinners at 2 p.m. while the Tortillos seek a fourth straight Final Four berth against the Harbour Centre Portmasters at 4 o'clock.

Rain or Shine downed Magnolia, 74-69, last Saturday to finish fourth in the eliminations with an 8-6 card and claim the second twice-to-beat privilege in the process behind Granny Goose.

Granny Goose also finished with the same card as Rain or Shine but was ranked third and clinched the first twice-to-beat privilege in the quarterfinal playoffs.

Already in the semifinals are Surprise leader Toyota Otis and Montaña which topped the double round robin with similar 10-4 records.

After ending their four-game slide, Rain or Shine coach Leo Austria said the Painters cannot afford to be complacent now.

"With our losses in this conference, we learned the hard way," said Austria. "The players were complacent. I hope they learned their lessons."

But the Painters know too well that the twice-to-beat advantage is no guarantee to a semifinal trip, especially with Kelly Williams and Arwind Santos pacing the Spinners.

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Magnolia vs Rain or Shine
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Granny Goose

In the finals of the last conference, Magnolia overcame a 0-2 deficit versus Rain or Shine to bag the Heroes Cup championship.

Harbour Centre also had a similar unfortunate experience versus Granny Goose in the same tournament.

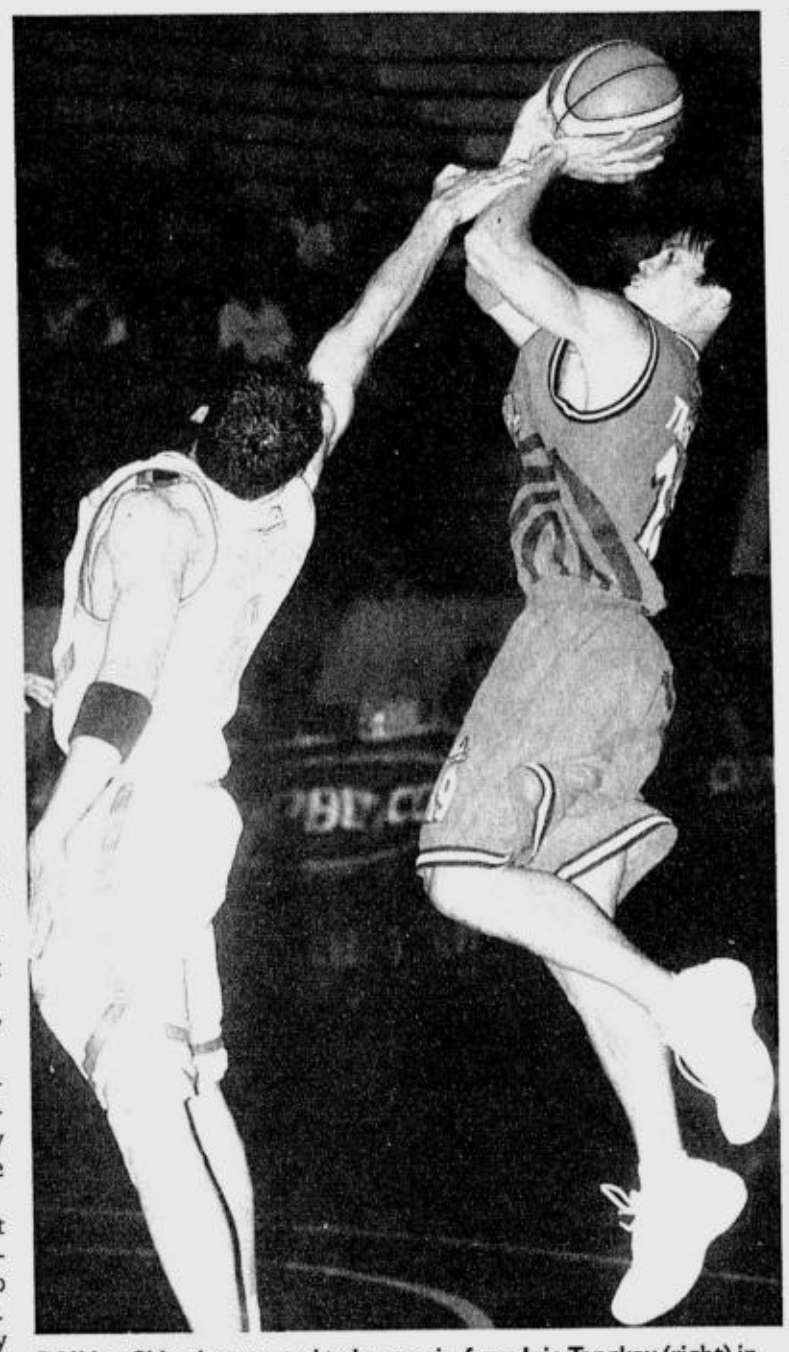
Then tagged as the heavy favorites, the Portmasters blew a twice-to-beat advantage in last year's quarterfinals against the Tortillos.

"The boys are raring to get even with Granny Goose," said Portmasters coach Jorge Gallent.

The two squads split their elimination encounters with Harbour Centre, scoring an 84-81 overtime triumph in the first round and Granny Goose responding with an 85-78 victory in the second round.

After starting the season with four straight losses, the Portmasters managed to recover behind the backcourt trio of Joseph Yeo, LA Tenorio and Chico Lanete to nail the last quarterfinal slot.

The Tortillos are hoping for another quick entry into the semifinals with JR Quinahan, Marvin Cruz and Jireh Ibanes at the helm. *Jasmine W. Payo*



RAIN or Shine is expected to lean on in-form Jojo Tangkay (right) in its bid to advance to the semifinals outright. ERIK ARAZAS

Pro-am today kicks off 90th RP Open golf

DEFENDING CHAMPION ADAM LE VESCONTE of Australia will lead 30 pros seeing action today in the traditional pro-amateur prelude to the prestigious 90th Philippine Open which starts Thursday at the fabled East course of Wack Wack in Mandaluyong.

The Queensland, Australia, native who won at Malarayat last year over Filipino Gerald Rosales will be paired with Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., POC chair Robert Aventajado and POC vice president and Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella.

Wack Wack chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, an avid golfer and a godfather of the sport, will hit the ceremonial drives before the 7:30 a.m. shotgun tee-off of the tournament co-presented by International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Abalos, Wack Wack director Tommy Tan and sports and games chair Pablo Soon will have Australian Adam Broom as their pro partner in the event organized by the Asian Tour and the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

A team is composed of three amateurs and a pro with the amateurs to carry handicaps not exceeding 18. The best score in the flight on each hole will count as the team score.

Newly turned pro and former amateur champion Juvic Pagunsan will lead 22 other Filipino pro golfers in the event also supported by Crowne Plaza, Globe Telecom, Konica Minolta, Motorola, Philcopy, Posi-Track, Srixon, Sunbolt, U-Bix Corp. and 3636.

Also expected to see action in what is generally regarded as the final practice for the RP Open are Rosales, who placed in a five-way tie for seventh in the Macau Open last week and won $6,837.

James Yap keeps hurting Giants afloat

YAP: "Translator"

JAMES YAP IS A TAKE-CHARGE GUY who does not have the gift of gab. So when he wants something done within the Purefoods Chunkee team, he'd rather lead by example.

That's why Giants coach Ryan Gregorio couldn't be more pleased in having a player like Yap, who is willing to step up and be a leader in a team reduced to nine players because of injuries.

Not just in scoring—Yap's forte—Gregorio pointed out, but as a chief rallying point for being one who keeps his head in times of stress.

The 24-year-old Escalante, Negros Occidental, native displayed that trait twice recently and earned the PBA Press Corps' Gran Matador Brandy Player of the Week honors.

In Purefoods' 87-84 win over Sta. Lucia Realty last Sunday, Yap had 22 points, four rebounds and two assists.

Yap also played a key role in the Giants' 72-69 victory over Talk 'N Text last Wednesday. He had 24 points, seven rebounds and two steals and his two free throws with 10.5 seconds left cushioned the impact of the Phone Pals' late rally.

The win over TNT assured Purefoods of one of two automatic semifinals slots.

Gregorio said Eugene Tejada, who fractured his spine during a rebound scuffle in a May 14 game against Red Bull, provides the inspiration. The youthful mentor adds it is Yap who translates the inspiration into victory.

SPORTSWATCH

New Balance Power Race listing ends

REGISTRATION FOR THE NEW BALANCE POWER RACE SLATED SUNDAY at the Bonifacio Global City ends today at the Vasquez Madrigal Plaza Building on Annapolis Street in Greenhills. Over 1,500 runners, including all the country's top long-distance runners as well as executives of multinational corporations and members of the diplomatic community, have registered for the race. More than P200,000 in cash prizes plus gift certificates are at stake in various divisions. The event is backed by Planet Sports, The Athletes Foot, Air New Zealand, Jam 88.3, Men's Health Magazine, Fitness First, Tokyo Tokyo, Rush, Bullfighter, Cebu Pacific and Crown Regency Hotel. The race starts promptly at 5:30 a.m. for the 25K New Balance Power Race, while the 10K and 5K run kicks off at 6 a.m. Start area is on 3rd Avenue corner 32nd Street at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City. The race will take the runners from 3rd Avenue to 26th Street, 32nd Avenue, Kalayaan flyover, Gil Puyat Avenue, Lawton Avenue and Bayani Avenue inside Fort Bonifacio and the Heritage Road. Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga has been invited to fire the starting gun.

Baylon, Dawa rule nat'l judo meet

TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN JOHN BAYLON AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games gold medalist Helen Dawa ruled their respective divisions in the 2006 Philippine National Individual Judo Championship at the Rizal Memorial badminton hall over the weekend. The Zamboanga native Baylon relied on his vast experience to capture the open weight men's category and the -81 kg class titles and keep his reputation as the country's leading judoka. Dawa of Cordillera Autonomous Region dominated the -45 kg women's division. She beat NCR's Jane Capawa to bag the crown. Elmarie Manlasan earned the -52 kg title with a victory over Jeremiah De Castro.

Nat'l bullstag derby today at Big Dome

THE FOURTH ELIMINATION ROUND OF THIS YEAR'S NFGB NATIONAL 8-Bullstag Derby gets going today at the Araneta Coliseum with 84 fights on tap. Seven participants currently lead the derby with four wins each—Pablo Hufano of Pangasinan (Partners Balani), Moy dela Cruz (GF-BAN), Rep. Abraham Mitra (ABM Palawan Vino), Benjamin Dimaano (ZGBA), Zaldy Du and Roger Talino (Migba), Willy Villarica and Obet Son (LGBA) and Eustaquio dela Torre (GF–BAN). The 4-cock championship round of the derby that stakes P3 million in prizes blasts off on Thursday, according to NFGB president Ricoy Palmares Jr. Derby sponsors are Purina Rooster Booster Gamebird Chows, Washout Shampoo by Lakpue, Strike Feeds by Asvet, Power Bullets, Amtyl by Excellence Gamefowl Specialists and Belamyl Vitamin Injection by VNJ Distributors. For inquiries, call 911-2928, 911-3101 or 0917-4476707.

Super SJC 5-cocker set May 24

THE SUPER 5-COCK DERBY OF SAN JUAN COLISEUM, A GATHERING OF prominent cockers from the provinces, fires off this Wednesday with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as main sponsor. Congressmen Claude Bautista of Davao, Danny Lagbas of Misamis Oriental and Oyie Umali of Nueva Ecija, Frankie Uy, Boy Uy and Jun Mendoza are jointly hosting the derby. Entries must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 725-5369. The 120-fight derby will start at 2 p.m., said SJC pit manager Pete Rivera.

Cheats are here to stay

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

JUST RECENTLY, A BOXER WAS SENTENCED to 30 years in prison. His crime: He killed a sportswriter.

Who said sportswriters are spared from killings?

But this one happened not here but in America.

God, America!

Who said America is the land of milk and honey?

It is.

But it is also the land of murder and money.

The boxer's name was James Butler Jr. Fighting by the moniker "The Harlem Hammer," Butler killed Sam Kellerman, a sports journalist, two years ago.

A judge in Los Angeles, California, also ordered Butler to pay $17,853 in funeral expenses to Kellerman's family, $10,000 to the state's victim restitution fund and $11,882 to the owner of the victim's apartment, which was left torched and blood-soaked after the killing.

The body of Kellerman was found in his Hollywood apartment on Oct. 17, 2004, near a hammer.

Only 29, the victim was the younger brother of New York-based boxing expert and radio talk show host Max Kellerman.

Butler, 33, had pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and arson before a jury was set to begin his trial on March 27.

He and Kellerman had been friends.

The police said Butler had been staying at the sportswriter's apartment at the time of the killing.

Some years back, my fellow sportswriter, Eddie Alinea, survived an assassin's assault. Knifed and badly wounded, Pareng Eddie, now Scoop president, has emerged from the ordeal stronger than ever, but still wonders to this day who could have done such a dastardly act. He said he knew no one who would want him dead.

Also to this day, the attacker remains unknown.

It is said that sportswriters are the least of assassins' targets, the reason being that sports journalists are known to be the most wholesome personalities in the newspaper business.

I did not say that. People outside the industry did.

Well, I know a lot of people dislike me. Beth Celis has told me so.

Believe Beth or not, I believe.

But I believe the dislike is mainly anchored more on my detractors not really agreeing with the picture I'm using here than anything.

And I have no problem with that since I don't do business with any one other than my wife, with any corporation other than the INQUIRER.

Writing is not scary, should not be scary. It is the result from writing that scares me, but not all the time.

I've had death threats myself. Each time I received one, I'd just brush it off like a bad dream—or would blame my picture here.

Why can't the mug shot be made side view to hide half of the face and make it a bit difficult to recognize the face behind the by-line?

Well, if done that way, it would show the flat nose, the Eddie Ilarde nose that my mom said she adored when I was in her womb.

Before Mark David Chapman shot and killed John Lennon in 1980, he asked the Chief Beatle, "Are you John Lennon?"

Chapman is serving life in a New York prison.

They don't shoot sportswriters here but sports people, they do.

In July three years ago, Go Teng Kok, not a sportswriter but a sportsman, a sports official, survived an assassin's bullets pumped into his face while he maneuvered to park his car near his Patafa (Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association) offices.

To this day, no suspect has been arrested. No clues even as to the motive behind the attempted murder that has permanently rearranged the face of the athletics president.

Recently, alleged cheats had marred the Palaro in Naga.

The would-be assassins of Pareng Eddie and GTK have remained free, unidentified.

Suspected cheats, both of the past and present variety, had been identified.

They remain free, unpunished.

Go, get America's guardians of justice here.

Seemingly, the case of "The Harlem Hammer" is too good to be true.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Seeded nat'l age-group chess players hold sway

THE SEEDED PLAYERS SWEPT PAST THEIR respective opponents as expected at the start yesterday of the 2006 National Age Group Championship at the 2nd floor, St. Francis Square Shopping Mall in Mandaluyong City.

Marching to the next round were top seeds Rulp Ylem Jose in girls' under-18, Jedara Docena in girls' under-14, Jemima Valdez in girls' under-10, Ivan Gil Biag in boys' under-19, Haridas Pascua in boys' under-14 and Mervince Yanzon in boys' under-10.

Jose downed Mary Antonette Altomia; Docena whipped Hiezel Coraje; Valdez beat Michaella Mariano; Biag topped Justin Keith Ver; Pascua defeated Normel Benigno de Jesus and Yanzon outplayed Michael Fernando.

Also securing their full point in the tournament organized by the Metropolitan Chess Club and sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines were Geneline de Ramos, Cheyzer Crystal Mendoza and Jelly Joy Valdez

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Lucky Fil (5)

Race 1—(Ort/Tri)—Tiger Lewis (7) Gonzee (1), Cat's Secret (2), Looney Tune (5)

Race 2—(Ort/Tri)—Monalisa (5), Dark Desert (7), Queen Of Diamonds (8), Opening Statement (2)

Race 3—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Field Star (5), Pyramid Relaunch (1), Real Tough (9), Seniority (8), Run Like D'Wind (3)

Race 4—(Tri)—Ocean Dignity (3), Romblon Rock (1),

Race 5—(Super Six/Ort/Tri)—Le Marage (9), Makati Haven (6), Dixie Dash (5), Saint Bernard (4), Besame Mucho (1), Dashing (3)

Race 6—(Ort/Tri)—Red Diamond (4), C Tonel (2), Dancing Ballerina (6), Shining Speed (5)

Race 7—(Penta/Ort/Tri)—Batang Bukid (1), Jigolo (7), Speedster (5), Sky Bound (4), Star Material (3)

Race 8—Super 6/Ort/Tri)—Magical Surf (4), Shifty (7), Sandok (5), Bomb Shell (2), Mary Jane Bomb (10), Pampanga Queen (1)

Lady Pirates catch last bus to semis

LYCEUM SURVIVED A LATE ATENEO FIGHTBACK TO EKE OUT A 25-20, 25-15, 22-25, 25-22 victory yesterday and clinch the last semifinal berth in the V-League presented by Shakey's Pizza at the Blue Eagle Gym.

Sherrilyn Carillo and Con Con Legaspi combined for 43 hits, including 35 on kills, as the Lady Pirates completed their surge from sixth place to joint third alongside the Far Eastern Lady Tamaraws and the San Sebastian Lady Stags with their fourth win in seven games. That was enough to snatch the fifth and last slot in the next round.

The Lady Eagles closed out the single round eliminations with a 1-6 card, marred by six straight losses, in the tournament presented by Shakey's Pizza and backed by Accel, Mikasa, ABC-5 and ABC Sports.

Thus, the Intramuros-based spikers joined La Salle (6-0) and Adamson (5-1), which were still playing at presstime, Far Eastern and San Sebastian in the semifinals, a double-round robin phase where they will carry their respective (win-loss) cards in the eliminations.

The semifinal round will resume on June 3, also at the Blue Eagle Gym, with ringside tickets pegged at P50 and upper box P30. Admission is free in the general admission, according to the organizing Sports Vision.

"Our defense did it," said Lyceum coach Emil Lontoc, who steered the country to its last women's Southeast Asian Games gold medal in the 1993 Singapore edition, in Filipino.

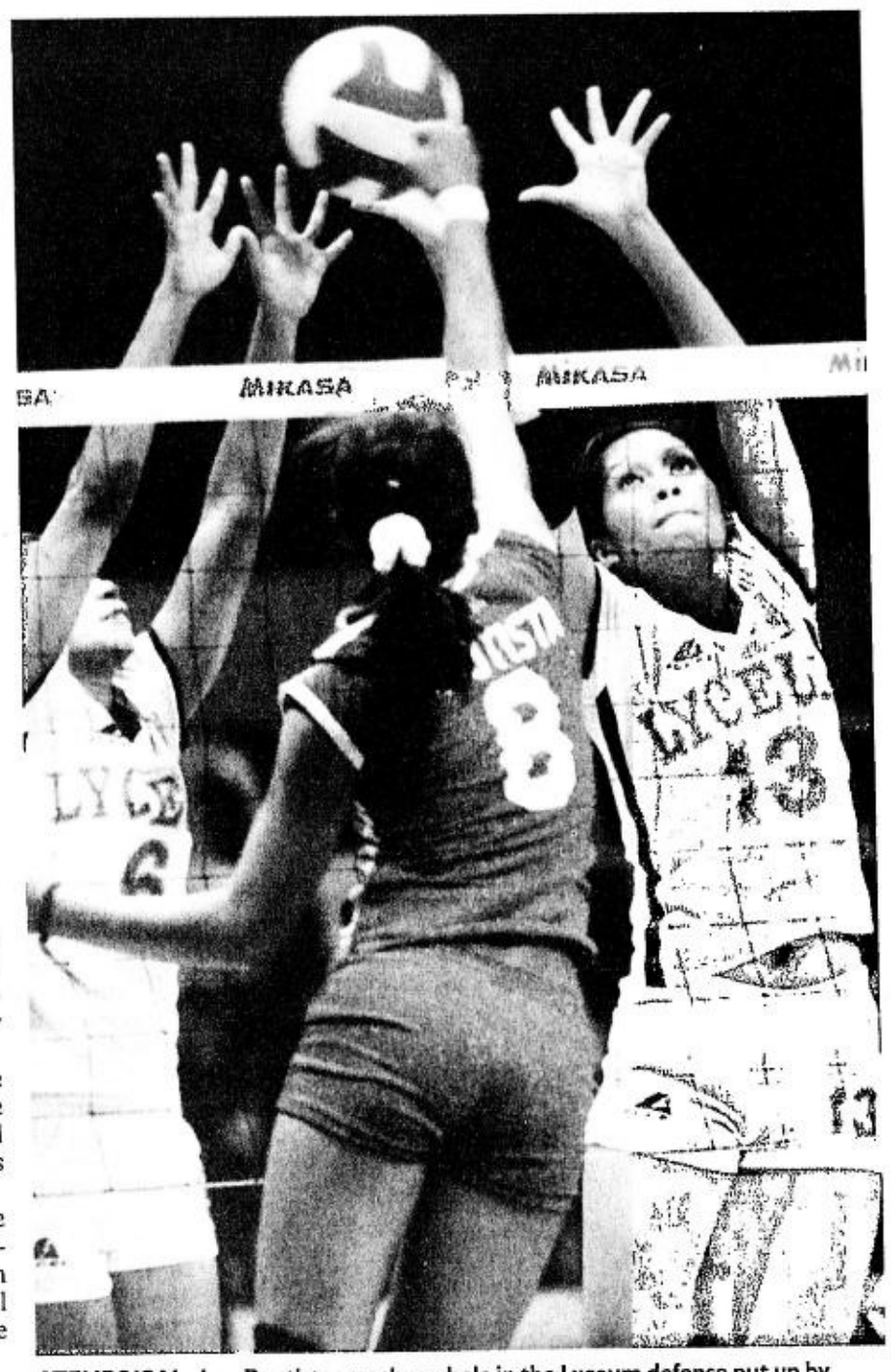
But the Lady Pirates had to go through some anxious moments before pulling off the win.

Taking the first two sets with relative ease, Lyceum turned cold and played listlessly, dropping the third set it dominated in the early going, then nearly blew a 12-point lead in the fourth.

Down 4-16, Ateneo went to Michelle Laborte, who unleashed an impressive net game with her superb blocking and deceiving spikes to rally the Lady Eagles to within, 20-22.

But Legaspi, who saw action for the Lady Archers last conference, and Carillo stepped up and blasted through Laborte's defense with crisp kills to foil the Lady Eagles' bid to send the game into a deciding fifth set.

"We got overconfident in the last two sets," said Lontoc.



ATENEO'S Nerissa Bautista punches a hole in the Lyceum defense put up by Glenda Pintolo (left) and Beverly Boto in the third set. ERIK ARAZAS

RP fencers still SEA champions

FILIPINO FENCERS BAGGED EIGHT GOLD, nine silver and 10 bronze medals to retain the Southeast Asian championships recently at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

Emerson Segui, Gian Carlo Nocom, Bonifacio Jacintos and Mary Rose Alfonso ruled the individual men's foil, men's saber, men's junior saber and women's junior saber, respectively.

The men's foil team of Segui, Ramil Endriano, Rolando Canlas and Patrick Catama, men's saber team of Nocom, Walbert Mendoza, Edmon Velez and Jacintos, women's saber squad of Janna Franquelli, Lenita Reyes, Wendy Mendoza and Mary Rose Alfonso and the women's foil team of Melly Joyce Angeles, Veena Nuestro, Michelle Mancenido and Dina Remolacio also won to complete the Philippines' eight-gold haul.

Vietnam finished second overall with a 7-6-9 (gold-silver-bronze) haul, Malaysia and Singapore captured four golds each and Brunei won its first international gold medal in the event organized by the Philippine Amateur Fencing Association and sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission.

More than 300 fencers from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines competed in the biggest regional fencing tournament.

Malaysia and Indonesia shared the limelight in the Cadets (under 17) level but the Filipinos showed their might in the junior and Open categories.

The Filipinos wrested the crown from Indonesia in 1991 and successfully defended it since then.

Valencia five posts record win margin

VALENCIA CITY —Valencia Golden Harvest posted the most lopsided victory so far in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship Sunday night by blasting the visiting Laguna-Sta. Rosa Pistons, 110-74, at the city gym.

Dino Cabili sparkled with 21 points as the Golden Harvest, handled by assistant coach Noli Tagsip and city sports coordinator Rico Ocho scored their second straight win and fourth in nine games.

The Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Sta. Rosa Mayor Joey Katindig suffered their eighth straight loss.

Valencia started strong, opening a 31-18 first-quarter lead and never looked back to finish with a record 36-point margin.

The Pistons played minus slotman Val Domingo and coach Vic Sanchez, who are part of the Spring Cooking Oil-backed NBC Selection that will fly to Taiwan today to compete in the Hua Lien cagefest.

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
F. Taguig	5	2
Bacchus/Harbour	6	4
Spring-P'ñaque	4	3
Batang Tagaytay	4	5
Pangasinan	2	7
Laguna-S. Rosa	0	8
South Division		
Ozamiz Cotta	7	2
Iligan Crusaders	6	3
North Cotabato	5	3
Pagadian	5	3
Valencia	4	5
Iloilo Warriors	1	4

The scores:

VALENCIA 110—Cabili 21, Braga 20, Cruz 16, Cummings 10, Navales 10, Nallon 5, Clavel 4, Dumapig 2, ROmaguera 2, Beraml 1, Celiz 0.

LAGUNA 74—Alminario 19, Proceso 12, Nuqui 10, Nolasco 9, Natividad 5, Prior 5, Vivero 3, Mamangon 3, Intano 3, Sy 2, Baylon 0, Aquino 0.

Quarters: 31-18, 52-44, 80-60, 110-74

4th Sherwood Invitationals set May 26-27

THE FOURTH SHERWOOD HILLS INVITAtional, the member-guest tournament of the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite, will be played on May 26-27 with an expected field of 150 participants.

Play will be fast-paced as a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. has been scheduled for both days.

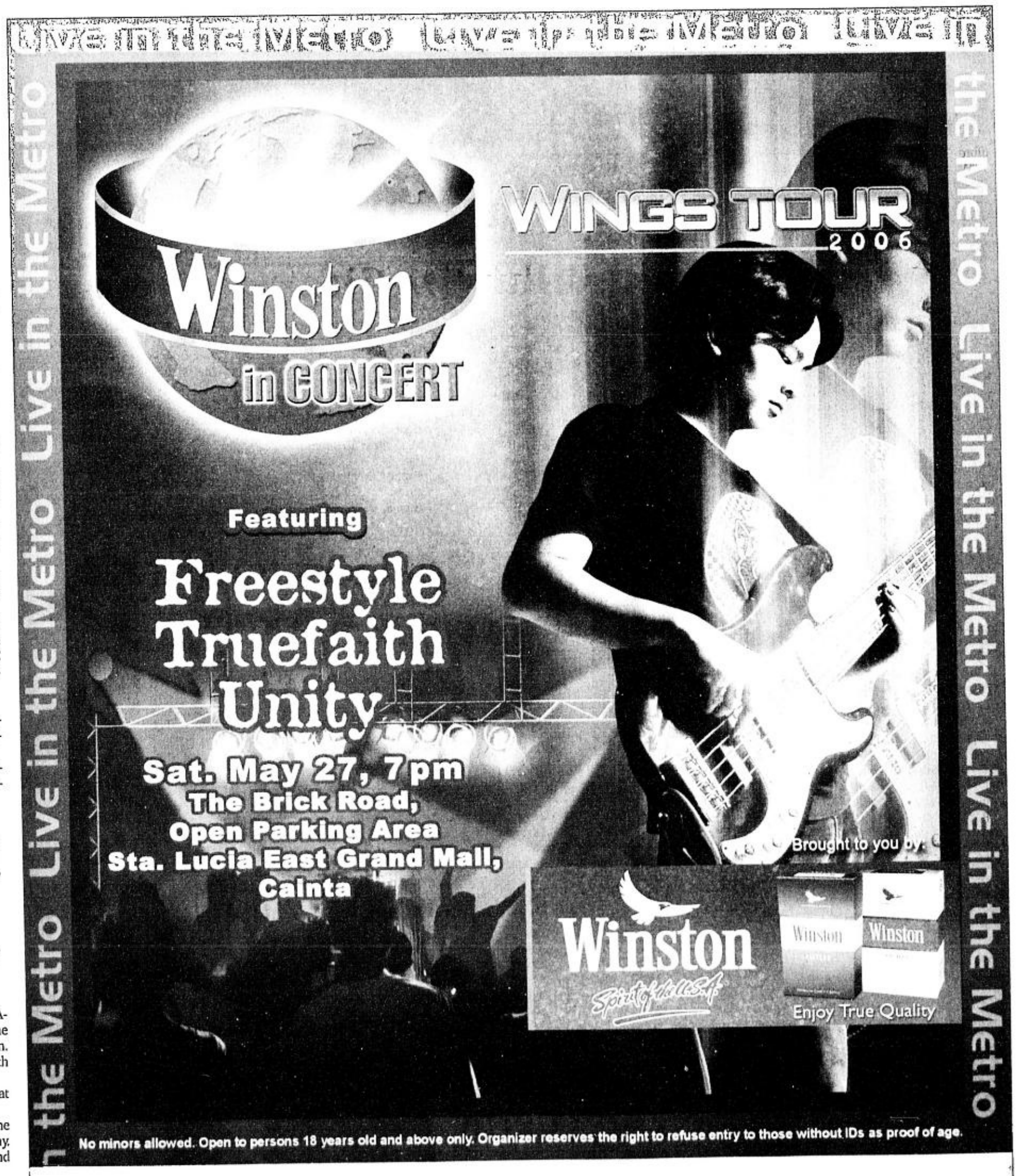
There will be two formats—best ball for the first day and aggregate for the second day. Awards to be disputed are the overall low net and low gross in Divisions I and II.

Sherwood Hills chair of the board Bob Sobrepeña will hit the ceremonial drive together with Trece Martires Mayor Jun Sagun on Thursday.

Major sponsors of the event are Golforce, Club Leisure Management and MRT.

The other sponsors are Mabuhay Golf, Camp John Hay Devt., Federal Management, Kork Inc., Manila Southwoods Manor, Warbird Security Agency, Sports Specialist, Corporate Air and Information Professionals Inc.

Each participant will receive a premium Rudy Project Eyewear as a giveaway.

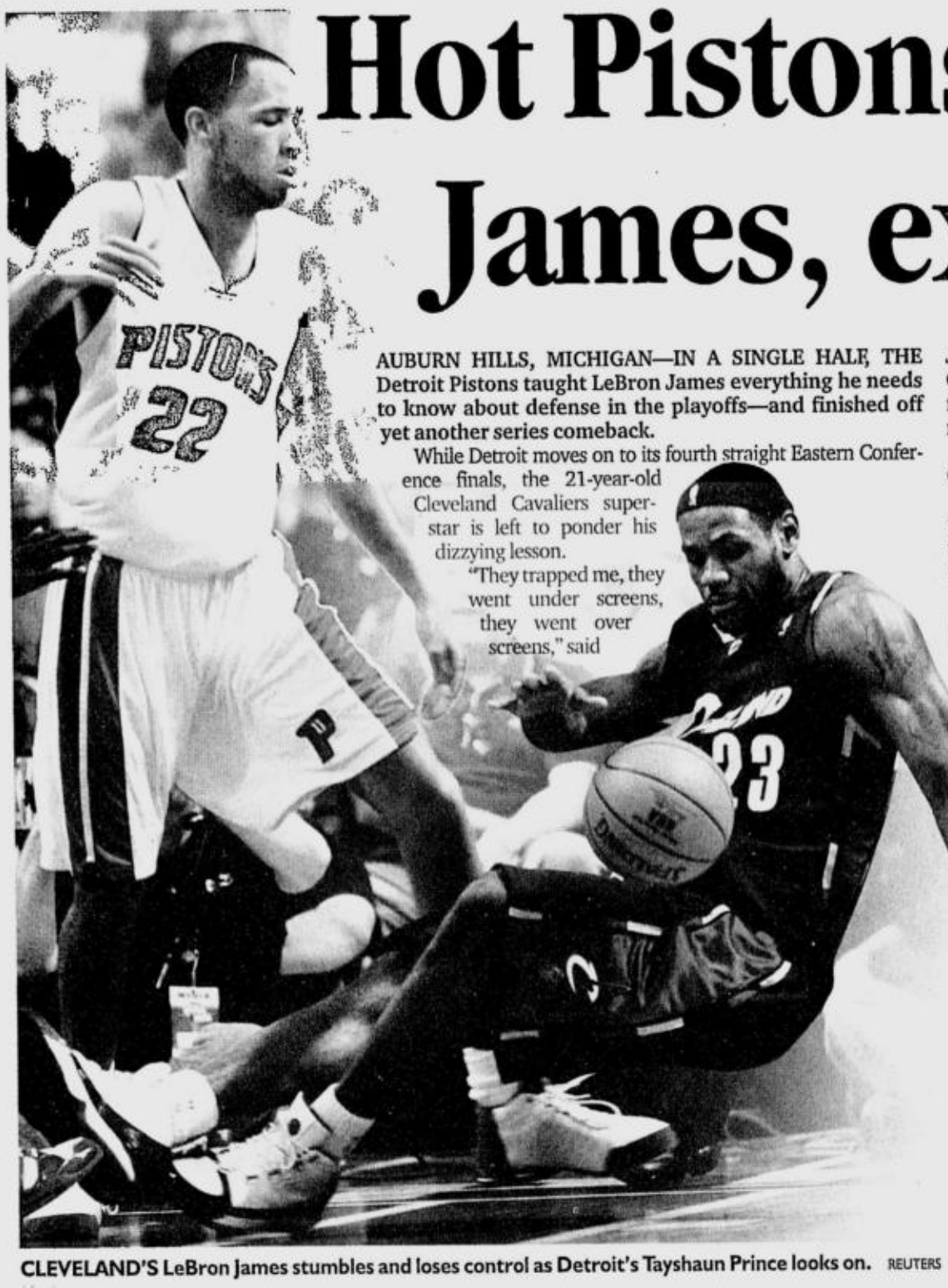


Government Warning:

Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

SPORTS

Hot Pistons shackle James, expel Cavs



CLEVELAND'S LeBron James stumbles and loses control as Detroit's Tayshaun Prince looks on. REUTERS

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—IN A SINGLE HALF, THE Detroit Pistons taught LeBron James everything he needs to know about defense in the playoffs—and finished off yet another series comeback.

While Detroit moves on to its fourth straight Eastern Conference finals, the 21-year-old Cleveland Cavaliers superstar is left to ponder his dizzying lesson.

"They trapped me, they went under screens, they went over screens," said James, who was held to one second-half field goal Sunday in the Cavs' 79-61 Game 7 loss to Detroit. "I've seen almost every defense that I could possibly see for the rest of my career in this series."

Playing in his first postseason, James was sensational at times for Cleveland, pushing the NBA favorites to the brink of elimination.

"There's nobody on his level that can get his teammates involved like he does," said Tayshaun Prince, who led the Pistons with 20 points. "He sees the plays before they even happen, and no one else does that. That's the reason this went seven games."

The Cavs were down by only two at halftime; then Detroit simply smothered James in the second half and took command with a 19-6 run that started in the third quarter and ended with a 67-52 lead midway through the fourth. James and the upstart Cavaliers were rendered helpless when it mattered most.

The Cavs led 3-2 in the second-round series and had a chance to eliminate the Pistons at home in Game 6 largely because James, who didn't live up to the hype—he surpassed it. But what the Pistons can do on defense—when they choose to play with intensity, like in a closeout game—probably is just as frightening for opponents.

Detroit held Cleveland to the lowest-point total in any Game 7 in NBA history; the third-lowest total in any playoff game since 1955; and 23 points in the second half, which tied the fewest scored in a postseason half since the shot clock was introduced a half-century ago.

"In a pressure situation, you do what you do best, and for us, that's defending," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said. "We locked down."

In a rematch of last year's conference finals, Detroit hosts Miami on Tuesday night in Game 1. The Heat have been resting since eliminating New Jersey last Tuesday.

The Pistons are the first team to reach the conference finals in four straight years since the Chicago Bulls did it from 1990-93. Detroit has remained among the NBA's elite in recent years by clamping down on defense when necessary; that time arrived in the second half Sunday against a franchise in the second round for the first time since 1993. *AP*

PRIDEFUL: Crack Phoenix guard Steve Nash. AP

Nash ready for ultimate shoot-out

PHOENIX—STEVE NASH AND THE REST OF the Phoenix Suns got some much-needed rest for their second Game 7 of these playoffs.

They will face a Los Angeles Clippers team playing the biggest game in that franchise's mostly sad history.

The winner Monday night advances to the Western Conference finals, where the Clippers never have been.

"It's the ultimate," Nash said after Sunday's practice. "I think both teams are going to be extremely prideful and will play with a lot of emotion. I think it will be a great game."

The contest will be played in front of a raucous, orange-clad packed house at US Airways Center, where the Suns blew out that other Los Angeles team, the Lakers, in Game 7 of the first round.

"I don't anticipate a Lakers Game 7," the Suns' Raja Bell said. "I think they're probably more up for the challenge than the Lakers were as far as being ready to play."

Nash shed a little more light on the nature of his struggles in the series, where his shooting has been off and he hasn't moved in the style that made him the league's Most Valuable Player for the second year in a row.

Nash has a chronic back ailment he has had to deal with for years. At times, the muscles around the damaged area don't provide the support he needs. *AP*

● NBA on TV

SOLAR SPORTS—LA Clippers vs Phoenix (10:30 a.m.)

Home court advantage may favor defending champions

DALLAS—THE BOOS TURNED INTO cheers for Michael Finley as soon as he set foot back in San Antonio.

When the Spurs' team plane arrived at home early Saturday, about 1,000 fans were there to congratulate them for rallying from a 3-1 deficit to force a Game 7 in their second-round series against the Dallas Mavericks.

Imagine what the atmosphere will be like in San Antonio on Monday night for the conference-finals-or-bust game.

"This is the benefit of having one of the best records in the league," forward Bruce Bowen said Sunday.

San Antonio earned the edge by winning 63 games in the regular season.

Last June, the Spurs benefited from being at home for their last Game 7, beating the Detroit Pistons in the NBA Finals to claim their second title in three years and third in seven.

Starting with the 2001 postseason, home teams have won 13 of 16 seventh games.

"We've won big games on the road all season and we've won in their building already in the playoffs," leading scorer Dirk Nowitzki said.

The Mavs failed to wrap things up Friday because their offense wasn't the same without guard Jason Terry, who was suspended for punching Finley.

"We've played each other 10 times this year and it's five and five," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich. *AP*

● NBA on TV

SOLAR SPORTS—Dallas vs San Antonio (8 a.m.)

Vets say Barbaro surgery successful

KENNETT SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA—KENtucky Derby winner Barbaro underwent more than five hours of surgery on Sunday to repair three broken bones in his right rear leg and afterward "practically jogged back to the stall," the colt's surgeon said.

For now "he is extremely comfortable in the leg," said Dr. Dean Richardson, who stressed before the marathon procedure that he's never worked on so many catastrophic injuries to one horse.

Barbaro sustained "life-threatening injuries" on Saturday when he broke bones above and below his right rear ankle at the start of the Preakness Stakes.

Rogie Ferrer Cup ladies golf tomorrow

MORE THAN 30 LADY PARBUSTERS will see action in the Rogie Ferrer Cup ladies invitational golf tournament at the executive course of Valley Golf & Country Club in Antipolo City.

The 18-hole Blind Callaway tournament sponsored by Ms Ferrer, former national sprint queen-turned-lady golfer, tees off from 7 to 8 a.m.

Participants include Ferrer herself, Noemi Cuenca, Nanie Cruz, Sonia Ongkiko, Nelly Cruz-Seiner, Nena Nakpil, Vicky Farrales, Luisa Lim, Nita Ng, Jo Guevàra, Lally Trinidad, Rose Cruz, Dina Silva, Sonia Valencia, Baby Bringas, Alice Escaler, Raquel Escobar, Norma Narcelles, Noriko Ochuka, Leng Cabili, Rene Francisco, Marissa Vergara, Alona Lopez, Letty Laurel, Nenuca Benitez, Auring Abejo, Baby Aquino, Jo Lava, Mary Jane Hernandez, Belen Ampong and Betsy Tuazon.

"Sports has been good to me," she said. "I just want to share my blessings with my fellow golfers."

WARY: Brazilian soccer legend Pele. AFP

Pele: Brazil faces tough odds keeping World Cup

LONDON—PELE BELIEVES IT WILL be harder for Brazil to win a sixth World Cup because it is the favorite.

Pressure, high expectations and bad luck have cost many past favorites, and the 2002 World Cup winner faces the same hurdle, Pele said during a visit to Britain to promote his new autobiography "Pele."

"That's the big problem," he said. "Today the big opponent of Brazil is being the favorite. Always in the World Cup, the favorite doesn't succeed."

The 65-year-old Pele, who won three World Cups for Brazil as a player, listed several teams who were tripped up after being tabbed the favorite. He cited the 1982 Brazilian team—Italy beat Germany in the final that year—and the Dutch teams of 1974 and 1978.

"If you remember in the last World Cup in Korea and Japan, Italy and France were favorites from Europe and Argentina was the best team from South America, and neither qualified from their groups," he said. *AP*

Asians hard-pressed to match '02 heroics

SINGAPORE—MATCHING THEIR heroic achievements in 2002 is going to be a tough task for Asian teams in Germany, with making the second round a more realistic target.

Japan and South Korea joint-hosted the last World Cup and both teams performed magnificently in front of home fans, with South Korea shocking everyone by reaching the semi-finals and Japan making the round of 16.

The Korean performance was the best ever by an Asian team at the World Cup. The previous honor belonged to North Korea, who reached the last eight in 1966.

But a repeat seems unlikely in hostile territory despite Asian football making progress over the past four years, with growing numbers of players gaining valuable experience by plying their trade in Europe.

At least the region has more teams than ever, with Australia now part of the Asian family and in their first World Cup finals in 32 years. *AFP*

SWISS MISS: Martina Hingis cherishes her "breakthrough" victory. AP

Hingis takes first title since return

ROME—NOW THAT MARTINA Hingis has won her first title since coming out of retirement, it's on to her next big goal: Winning her first French Open.

Hingis beat Dinara Safina 6-2, 7-5 in the Italian Open final on Sunday for her 41st career title, more than four years after her 40th.

"It's a great victory, but it doesn't end," Hingis said. "This is just the beginning of tough tournaments coming up—the French Open and Wimbledon."

Up first was the French, the only Grand Slam she hasn't won. A finalist twice in Paris, the 2006 edition starts next Sunday.

"Winning this event (in Rome), I know that I can do it again. I feel like I definitely have it in me," Hingis said.

She returned in January after more than three years out of the game, and has reached at least the quarterfinals in seven of 10 tournaments. *AP*

Stellar field in NCA int'l derby

ONLY THE FINEST ROOSTERS OF THE VERY best Filipino and American breeders will be fielded in the National Cockers Association 8-Cock International Derby slated May 29, 31 and June 2 at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City.

The assurance came from the NCA members who are vying in what is billed as the country's biggest international breeders' championships.

Joe Wolcott, the former NCA International champion, and Dan Gray head the elite American contingent in the derby.

"We know that the NCA International is the best and toughest in the world and this is why we are coming in fully prepared," said Wolcott.

Among those spearheading the local challenge are Ramon Revilla, Manny Pacquiao, Manolo Lopez, Boy Nograles, Gov. Plaza, Louie Cua, Chavit Singson, Eddie and Bomboy Araneta, Mario Villamor and Cito Alberto, Biteng Amante, Melchor Caluag, Efren Canlas, Jun and Rudy Jingco, B. Royo, Edwin Santos, Gerry Ramos, Nestor Mercado, Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud, William Go, Bong Pineda, Claude Bautista, Ronnie Puno, Iggy Arroyo, Ito Ynares, Jun Santiago, JV Magsaysay, Rudy Albano, Manny and Arman Santos, Joey Sarasola, Danding Cojuangco, Pepito Ngo, Tony Tan, Boy Marzo, Pol Estrellado, Benjie Lim, Tony Lasalla, Baby Asisto, Eric de la Rosa, Ging Paras, Butch Pichay, Chito Tinsay, Nonoy Libarnes and Patrick Antonio.

WORLD-RENOWNED cocker-breeders Joe Wolcott (right) and Larry Whitehead (center) head the elite US contingent.

Ochoa triumphs again

NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK—Mexico's Lorena Ochoa jumped past Karrie Webb to the top of the LPGA money list here Sunday, firing a bogey-free five-under par 66 to win the Sybase Classic by two strokes.

Ochoa finished 54 holes at the rain-shortened event on five-under par 208 after 71s in the rain-interrupted first round and Saturday's second round. Play Friday was wiped out by rain, forcing the event to be trimmed to three rounds.

Ochoa won her second title in 10 starts this year, adding the top prize of $195,000 to the $919,888 she won in a season that has seen five runner-up efforts. *AFP*

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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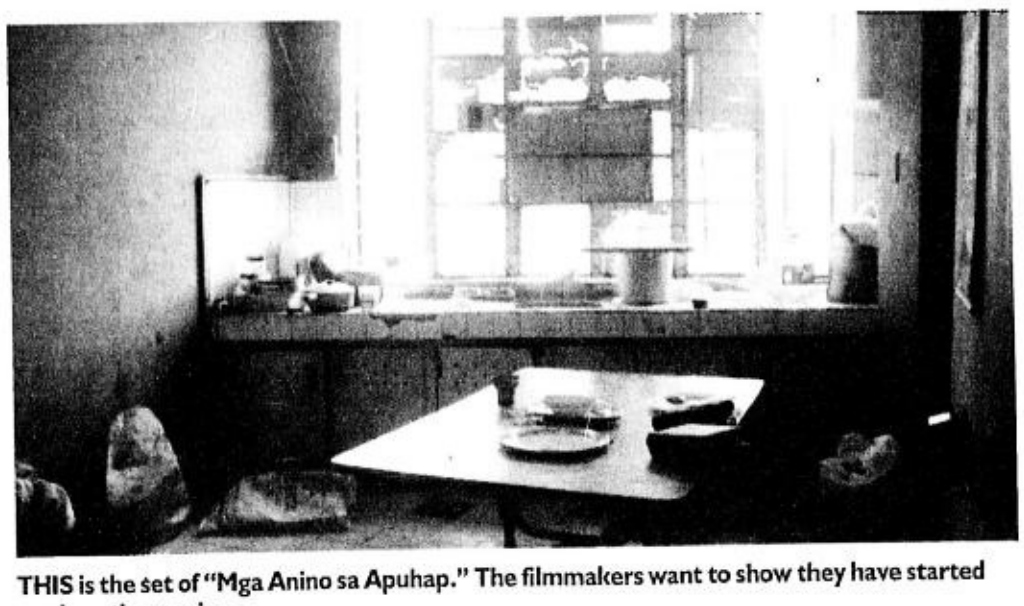


THIS is the set of "Mga Anino sa Apuhap." The filmmakers want to show they have started work on the movie.

Erstwhile finalist dropped from Cinemalaya film fest

By Marinel R. Cruz

"THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT THINK WE can finish our work on time. It should've first checked if there's movement within the production. I don't think it's fair to say our group did nothing for the past two months," declared filmmaker Sigrid Andrea Bernardo.

Bernardo, co-director of Cinemalaya full-length feature finalist "Mga Anino sa Apuhap," is contesting the film's disqualification to compete in the festival slated in July.

In a letter dated May 10, the Cinemalaya festival committee "terminated" its contract with "Anino" writer and project proponent Jon Lazam, "in view of violations [committed by Lazam's group]."

Festival director Nestor Jardin and competition director Laurice Guillen-Feleo signed the disqualification letter.

The letter stated that "Anino's" disqualification was due to Lazam's failure to complete the requirements in time for the scheduled Feb. 24 deadline.

"Your two-month delay is inexcusable and unacceptable," the committee heads said. Lazam insisted he completed the requirements on April 27.

The committee also pointed out Lazam's "intention" to submit the film's final copy—based on the production's timetable—on June 15, or three weeks beyond the target date of May 30.

In another letter, dated May 16, Feleo said she found it "unacceptable" that the counterpart financial plan Lazam's group presented to the committee "did not specify commitments supporting your production budget beyond the P500,000 seed grant [from Cinemalaya]."

Bernardo argued: "They requested a lot of things from Jon, and he was able to comply. These caused delay in our work schedule."

She added: "Ms Laurice said the others already started filming and there's no way for us to catch up. My point is, had they agreed with what we submitted, we would have begun filming on schedule. We're only eyeing eight shooting days. We're highly organized."

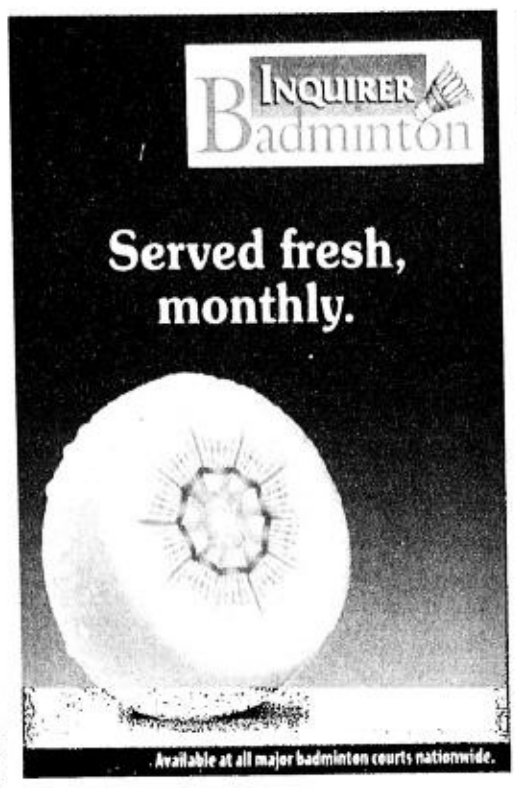
According to Lazam, four weeks after the original script of "Anino"—which he co-wrote with Ronald Verzo—was formally chosen as one of the finalists, Robbie Tan "instructed" him to consult

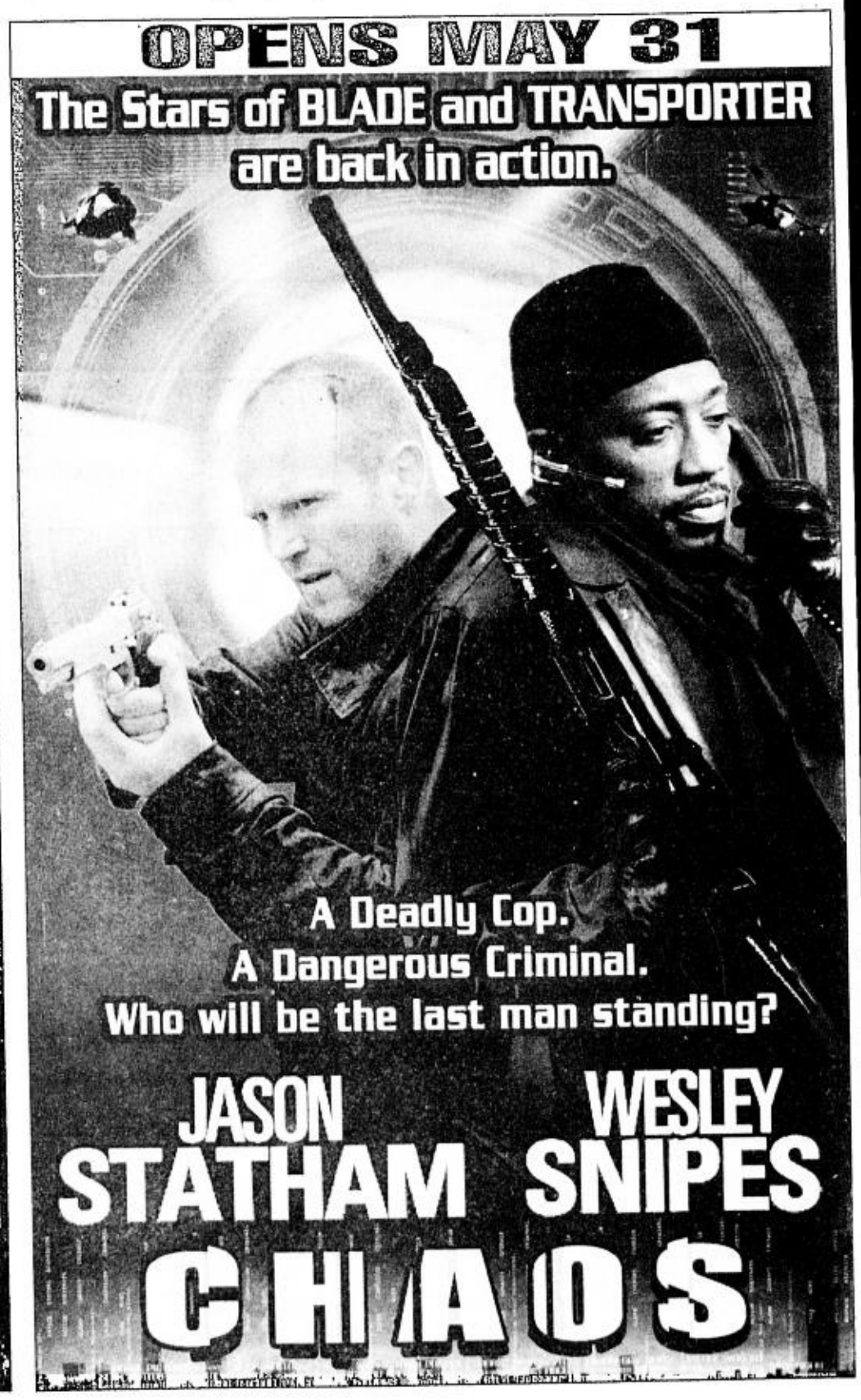
ERSTWHILE/ A2-2

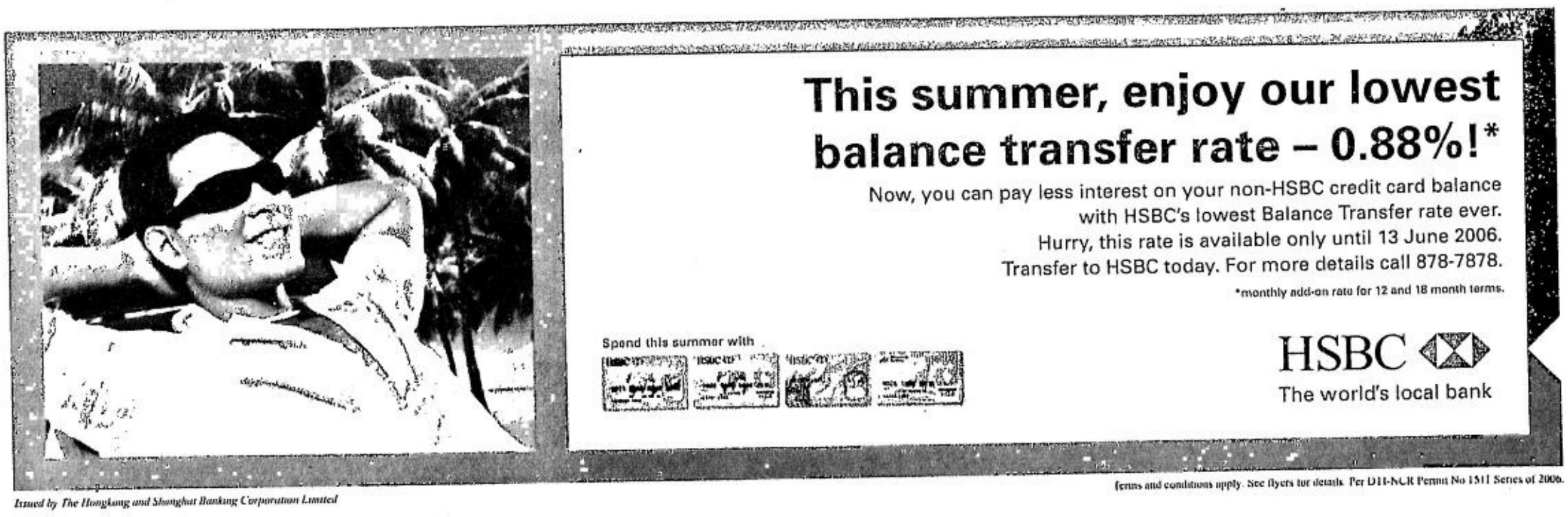
DID YOU KNOW...

NEW YORK—THE RICKY MARTIN FOUNDATION HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH the International Organization for Migration to combat sexual exploitation and the trafficking of children. The agreement, signed in Madrid, Spain, will help develop joint efforts between the two organizations. IOM is implementing over 150 counter-trafficking projects around the globe.

"We are committed to ending child exploitation," Martin, 34, said in a statement. "We are certain that this alliance will create a global call to action." *AP*







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E-mail your answers together with your name, address, age and contact number at movieaddicts_smcinema@yahoo.com and 10 lucky winners will be chosen from all the entries received. Multiple e-mails sent will only be counted as a single entry. Deadline for the submission of entries is on May 31, 2006. Watch out this space for the announcement of winners. All winners will be notified through phone on how to claim their prizes.

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TIME WAS WHEN THE LATE-LA were reserved for talk shows an These days, however, if you sta enough to watch television at 11 night, you can get to view—news

What's going on here? It appears time viewing hours have become s profitable that TV network execu have stretched them beyond the 10 p cut-off point, and loaded them with coms, dramas and other popular mats—thus pushing some newscast the witching hour.

This is okay if you're a witch, but m viewers interested in the news have go to work in the morning, so they'r bed before midnight, and can't get watch those new late-late news p grams.

So, how does this impinge on the works' obligation to provide view with news, information and public a to balance the other more commer dish out? They don't see this as a pr ly.

They could point out that 7 p.m available for the early birds. But this fort to office workers who arrive ho long evening commute, and thus m news shows.

They need to get the news at 10 o the networks used to provide it not t fore they opted to maximize the inc potential of the "expanded" prime ment hours.

Erstwhile finalist ...

From page A2-1

screenwriter Armando "Bing" Lao on how the script could be improved.

Tan is chair of Cinemalaya's monitoring group, while Lao is a member of the festival selection committee.

Lazam said Lao advised Verzo and himself to "change the narrative and dramatic structure of the script from the top level."

Lazam shared: "We felt the strain of having to undergo the whole process of writing the script again. The original script was written for more or less two months, and we are supposed to finish the new one in two weeks."

On April 18, Lazam said he received a phone call from Tan "demanding" that he submit the final script, which Lao, approved on or before April 21.

"[Tan said] failure to comply would mean disqualification from the competition," Lazam recalled.

On April 27, as part of the group's counterpart financial plan, Lenaur Abbot, assistant production manager for sponsorship, presented Tan a letter stating that media company BigHype has pledged to raise for "Anino" P500,000 through sponsorship. But Tan did not approve of the financing plan.

The following day, Tan sent word that "Anino" had been disqualified from joining the festival, said Lazam.

"We think that this is the main reason," said Sigrid. "We requested a meeting with the committee, but were denied. What is one day to face us? Will they not consider the effort we exerted for this project, or the money we shelled out? P100,000 of our supposed P700,000 will come from our own pockets."

Looks like Nyoy ...

From page A2-4

So their "sweet nothings" on screen amount to nothing after all.

Proud Robbie

Had an animated chat with Seiko Films' main man **Robbie Tan**. He is proud of his project, "I Just Want To Be Happy" (showing in July).

"It's about a couple who have been married for so long, and suddenly one day the girl realizes she's no longer in love. So she leaves. I'm sure many couples can relate to that," Robbie said.

For most show biz couples, breaking up and exchanging partners has become habit-forming. The mortality rate of celebrity marriages seems to be inversely proportional to the standards of morality in the biz.

Still on the Seiko movie, Robbie told me that **Keanna Reeves** is part of the cast. He quipped. "It's her first *matino na* role... *he-he-he...*"

(E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.)

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Some TV newscasts pushed back to witching hour

'E TV HOURS
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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

But, are viewers objecting to this rude neglect? Most of them aren't, because they don't think it's their function to do so. Well, if they don't, who will?

Other viewers feel that their complaints can't make a difference. But past experience has shown that concerted viewers' initiatives can persuade the networks to be of genuine and responsible service to viewers.

So, if you are unhappy about the TV service you're getting, speak up.

While we're at it, we'd also like to complain about another new wrinkle on local TV that's a disservice to viewers. These days, TV shows aren't listed according to timeslots, because they often run overtime due to their commercial load.

So, TV buffs can no longer plan their viewing schedules, as they used to.

Some "noontime" shows end past 3 p.m.! And evening programs are announced to start telecasting, not at 7 or 8 or 9 p.m., but "after (the previous program)."

So, viewers just have to wait until the show they want to watch finally comes around. How cavalier can the TV networks get?

In this case, very.

'X-Men: The Last Stand'

"X-Men III: The Last Stand " begins its Philippine run tomorrow, with a total of 73 prints released nationwide.

Joining the cast of the final "X-Men" movie are Kelsey Grammar as Dr. Henry McCoy, also known as Beast, and Eric Dane as Multiple Man.

'Relevance'

The live album premiere of Gary Valenciano's new "Relevance" CD will be held at SM Megamall's Cinema 4, tomorrow at 6 p.m.

'Poseidon' on top

Warner Bros.' 'Poseidon' opened at no. 1 in the Philippines, with a five-day (May 10 to 14) gross of P32.1 million, the year's third biggest opening.

The disaster film stars Josh Lucas and Kurt Russell.

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3 THE DA VINCI CODE 11:30, 2:40, 6:00, 9:30 R-18
4 POSEIDON 1:30, 3:55, 6:20, 8:45, 11:10 PG-13

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CINEMA 5 THE DA VINCI CODE 10:20, 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:20 R18
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POSEIDON PG13 1:45,3:55
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OVER THE HEDGE G 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00
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3 THE DA VINCI CODE MTRCB. R-18 12:30, 3.35, 6:40, 9:45PM
4 THE DA VINCI CODE MTRCB R-18 11:45, 2.50, 5.55, 9:00PM
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	4 POSEIDON	5 OVER THE HEDGE	6 THE DA VINCI CODE	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE DA VINCI CODE 1.40, 4.50, 8.00, 11.10 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE DA VINCI CODE 12:50, 4:00, 7:10, 10:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
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GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 12:25 PM, 2:45, 5:05, 9:45
Cinema 2* - 1:35 PM, 3:55, 6:15, 10:55
GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:20 PM, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 3:20 PM, 5:40, 8:50
GREENBELT 1
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ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20
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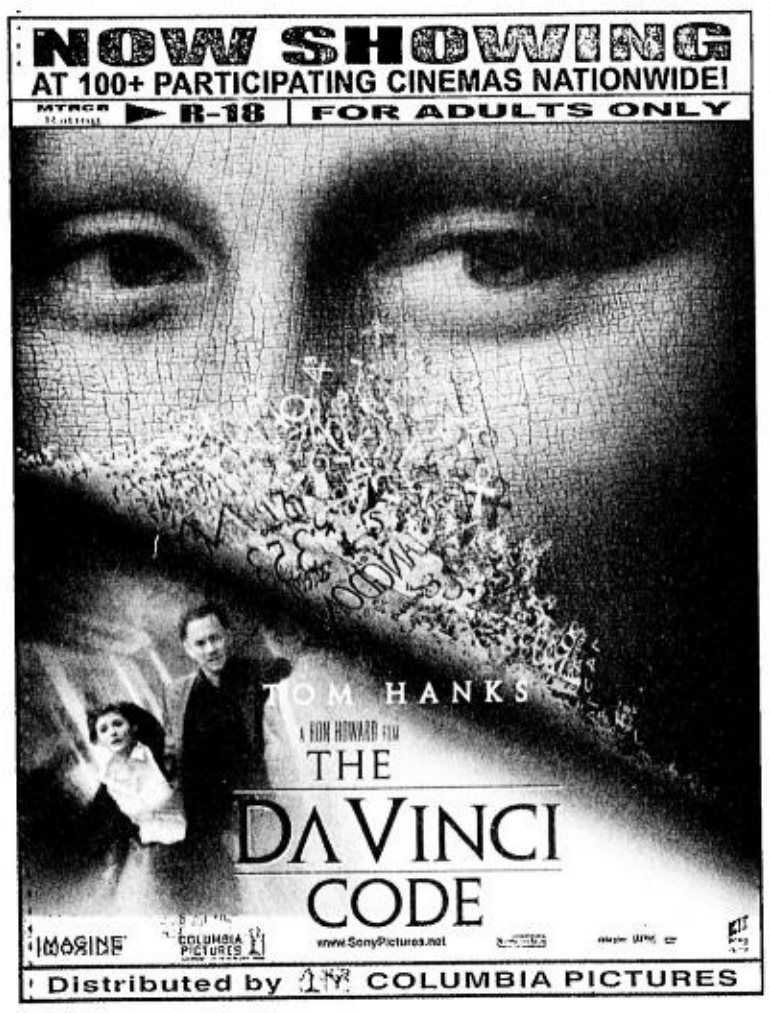
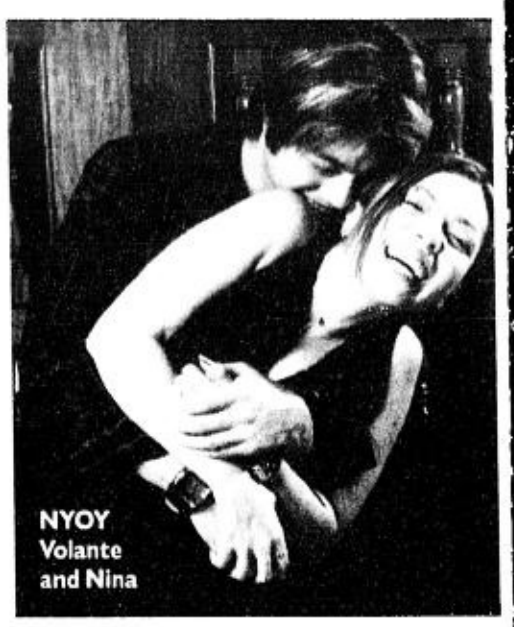


Looks like Nyoy and Nina are tying the knot soon


NYOY Volante and Nina

NYOY VOLANTE AND NINA HAVE SUCH AN ideal relationship. That's the way it usually is for good friends who turn into lovers.

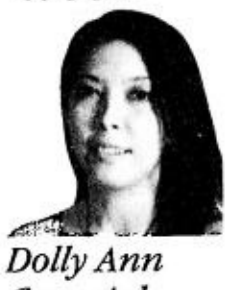
"We can't pinpoint exactly when it became *us*. We didn't go through the dating and courtship stage. Before we realized it, we were in love," reveals Nyoy.

In spite of their hectic schedules, they make it a point to watch each other's shows" If I have recording or taping and she has a gig we meet up afterwards. But if I'm free, I really watch her show. I love being part of her audience as much as I love singing with her."

Will wedding bells ring for them anytime soon? Nyoy says, smiling, "Of course that's in the agenda but that has to wait for now."

Sometimes the best things are those we don't plan. Looks like Nyoy and Nina will make the transition from being lovers to a married couple as smoothly as they did from friends to lovers.

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Ann Carvajal

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5	OVER THE HEDGE

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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

What's up Polo?

I cornered **Polo Ravales** about the status of his relationship with **Ara Mina**. "MU" he quipped.

Define that overused acronym, I pushed.

"No commitment. Just attachment," he explained.

What about involvement?

"If that means intimacy then, no."

With both their bodies classified under "to die for," I wonder how long they can keep their chastity belts fastened.

WhadyaSay?

John Pratts sounded like a little boy as he lamented, "It's been two weeks since **Say** (Alonzo) and I last saw each other. When we get together, we will make up for lost time. We've both been so busy lately." Never enough time but always enough love. WhadyaSay, John?

No pressure

Cherrie Pie Picache doesn't feel the pressure to marry her live-in partner of six years, **Gary Tria**, just because they have a love child, Anton, 4.

"We'll get there," she says, "but we don't want to have a wedding just for the heck of having one. When we take the plunge we want it to be for keeps. I feel that when you're not married and staying together, you're on your toes. Married couples tend to take each other for granted since *kampante na sila* with each other." To tie the knot or not? Live in or leave? Love is always the answer to that...

Classified ads show

"Ano Ba'ng Hanap Mo?," the only classified ads-magazine show (IBC 13), hits TV screens on May 28, 3 p.m.

It's a pioneering concept where viewers will find everything they need—a car, house, cell phone, jobs, etc., maybe even a text mate. Hosted by **Mickey Ferriols**, **Hyubs** and **Maoi Roca**, the show is directed by my good friend **Earl Ignacio** and produced by my ever-dependable *kapatid* **Toffee Runas** of Batcave Productions. Each segment such as Tech Muna, Hanap Bahay, Palit Tayo, The Fuzz, is presented in a humorous and entertaining manner. To place ads call 425-1155 or 436-3579 or log on to www.anobanghanapmo.com

Shiella Mae's show

Young and pretty **Shiella Mae** will have a concert on May 25 at Metro Comedy Bar (West Ave, QC). She will be joined by her crush **Sam Milby** and **Toni Gonzaga**. The one-night show is produced by **Vic Veluz** of Oro Entertainment, following the success of Shiella Mae's debut album. Other performers are **Juaquin**, **Tsikboyz** and **J-Lee**. Call 927-9077 or 929-1215

Love a la show biz

Angelika de la Cruz is not a bit worried that her kissing scenes with **Ryan Agoncillo** in "Bituing Walang Ningning" will cause **Judy Ann Santos** (Ryan's girl) severe jealousy attacks. "Juday is a professional. She knows that it's purely work," she says. So Ryan and Angelika are in it just for the sake of art. Not for the sake of heart.

Just a love team

Jason Abalos swears that **Angelica Panganiban** and him are just a love team. They are not like most screen partners who give their followers false hopes. "I'm not courting her. We work together well and that's what we want to focus on."

LOOKS/ A2-2

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PETRON

ICTSI buys Indonesian port operator

Says new acquisition has big potential for growth

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST PORT operator is making good on its promise to expand foreign operations to offset lackluster local activity, announcing yesterday the acquisition of an Indonesian port business.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) said it had purchased a 95-percent stake in PT Makassar Terminal Services (MTS).

The company runs a port in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, which is a relatively small operation compared to ICTSI's other offshore investments.

ICTSI said the purchase, worth $5.6 million, was made through its Singapore-based special purpose holding company, ICTSI Far East Pte Ltd. It also "advanced funds to MTS" to allow the company to pay its outstanding obligations, the statement added.

ICTSI/ B5

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Majority of employed Filipinos worked full-time in 2005

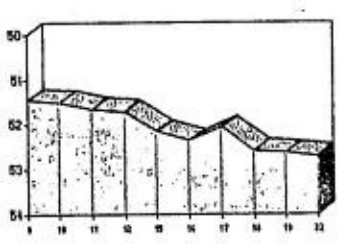
Of the 32.3 million Filipinos employed in 2005, 63 percent, or 20.2 million, were employed full-time (40 hours a week), an increase of 4.2 percent from the 2004 figure of 19.4 million.

Source: The 2005 Employment Situation, Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics

Kate Podroso PDI Research

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



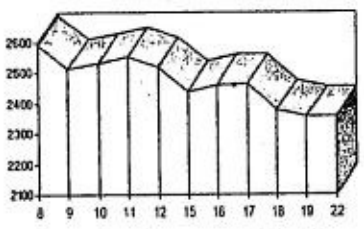
MAY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 52.72 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 22, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks close slightly higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED LITTLE CHANGED yesterday as the market consolidated with some light bargain hunting in blue chips offset by declines in the broader market, dealers said.

They said the market would consolidate, after recent volatility that saw the main index rising to its highest point in nearly seven years early this month, and then falling

STOCKS/ B3

Peso dips to 4-month low of 52.72 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO DIPPED TO A NEW FOUR-MONTH low of 52.72 against the dollar yesterday in step with regional currencies battered by prospects of further interest rate increases in the United States.

It was the peso's lowest closing at the Philippine Dealing System since ending at 51.875:$1 last Jan. 23. Total value turnover amounted to $510.5 million.

The local currency traded between an intra-day high of 52.68 and a low of 52.86 against the greenback. Although it recovered some losses at intra-day trade, it still ended 7 centavos lower than Friday's closing of 52.65:$1.

The peso, Asia's best performing currency last year when it gained about 6 percent against the dollar, has shed about 3 percent of its value in the last two weeks alone.

"The peso was hit by emerging domestic demand ahead of the importation season (in the third quarter) and the dollar's across-the-board recovery in the region as global investors are becoming more risk-averse," a currency trader at a local commercial bank said.

Global analysts said the turbulence in emerging markets reflected continued worries over US inflation, the Federal Reserve's possible response, how high interest rates would move and how much the US economy would soften.

Other currencies in the region like the Indonesian rupiah, Singapore dollar, Malaysian ringgit, Thai baht, Korean won, Taiwanese dollar and even the Japanese yen succumbed to the dollar's strengthening yesterday.

"For investors the key issue is whether fundamentals (economic trends, valuations) have changed enough to shift the long-run direction of markets. Our answer would be no, not yet, but clearly the outlook for risk markets will deteriorate further if inflation pressures keep mounting, forcing the Fed to tighten into a slowing economy," said American Express (Amex) Bank's global economics unit.

In the case of the peso, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the peso continued to be supported by positive fundamentals and was just merely reacting to regional and international market developments.

"The main reason is market expectation that the Fed may increase interest rates again, but if

PESO/ B5

WHAT'S INSIDE

BTr cancels auction of 25-year treasury bonds /B3

Crude oil prices rise toward $69/barrel /B6

All-New Global Car

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Speak a boo

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

AT LAST SOMEBODY IS TRYING TO PUT A stop to all the undue advantage that the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy enjoys in the country's 3rd biggest lender—Equitable PCI Bank.

Reports said that Trans Middle East, a holding company of the Romualdez family, is asking the court to disqualify the nominees of the SM group to the EPCIB board for the annual stockholders' meeting today.

Reason: An obvious conflict of interest!

Well, the SM group owns two other banks, Banco de Oro, ranked 9th largest in the country in terms of resources, and China Bank. The same group nevertheless wants BDO to take over EPCIB—through a "merger of equals."

But since the SM group bought last year the 24-percent EPCIB interest of the Go family, BDO executives (led by Henry Sy's daughter Tessie Sy-Coson) assigned themselves to sensitive positions in EPCIB, such as the powerful executive committee and the credit committee.

In other countries, the SM group would never have heard the end of it from the regulatory agencies. But not here.

Here, of course, nobody in the Bangko Sentral, the regulator of the banking system, or the Securities and Exchange Commission, the policeman of publicly listed companies like EPCIB and BDO, could move a finger.

It seems that certain "godfathers" are doing a good job for the SM group.

* * *

As a stockholder of EPCIB, in effect, Trans Middle East wants to prevent the SM group from playing its game of "peekaboo."

To me, no matter what happens during the annual stockholders' meeting today, at least the court case registers the wrongness of it all.

No other group in this country plays the same game as the SM group of putting its BDO people in positions where they could already see the innards of another competing bank like EPCIB.

That's why, from what I gathered, the giant retail chain Mercury Drug, for instance, is no longer among the biggest clients of EPCIB. For one, the SM group is also one of the major stockholders of another drug store chain called Watson's.

Okay—it is possible that the SM group is far from ordering its people in the EPCIB board to become voyeurs.

But the thing is, it is hard to understand what made the SM group so special to the Bangko Sentral or the SEC, so that its people were allowed to take control of a bank with which the SM group competed directly.

And to think, even the GSIS and the SSS just let it all go. Let us remember that—together—these pension funds of the working class are the biggest stockholders in EPCIB with more than 40 percent. I mean, they have a lot more to lose in the bank than Trans Middle East does.

Moreover, as if to tell the world (not to mention the GSIS and the SSS) what side it is actually rooting for, this cute administration of Gloriaetta even set loose some attack dogs against the Romualdez family.

To all that we can only say... well, BOO!

* * *

On another front, as this cute administration missed its revenue targets last month, we are seeing some first-class blame-throwing wrapped with a little buck-passing.

Well, targets are precisely that—targets! Either you fall short of the targets or you exceed them! But you can never pin the exact reason for your falling short of the targets. It is all guesswork. Even the setting of the target is all guesswork, in the first place.

Immediately, however, after it became clear that this cute administration would fall short of its revenue targets, seemingly to deflect the flak from the leadership ability of somebody in the Palace, a known political lapdog of Gloriaetta in Congress attacked a single person, wanting him to take all the blame for the missed targets.

The lapdog of course was none other than Rep. Jose Salceda, and our hero in Congress blamed the BIR chief, Jose Augusto Buñag. In fact, Salceda agitated for Gloriaetta to fire Buñag.

Apparently, based on Salceda's guesswork, the reason why this cute administration missed the targets was a simple one. And that is, well, the "corruption" in the BIR. Really?

But since when was the BIR the cleanest office in town? Corruption at the BIR is a constant thing. If some people at the BIR are corrupt, they were corrupt even during those months when this cute administration overshot its revenue collection targets.

And so to Salceda, it seems the BIR was especially corrupt last month. Now, the question is, will firing the BIR chief solve the problem? Under this cute administration, BIR chiefs come and go, but it never solved anything. Hoorah to Salceda!

* * *

And so the defenders of the BIR should only come back with reasons. Maybe the targets were too high. Or the computation of revenue was unfair to the BIR, because it collected taxes that were not credited to its collection, but were considered when the targets were set. You know—that kind of guesswork.

To me, it is all a matter of bureaucratic hoolabaloo. The overall impact on the revenue—whether the collection is credited to the BIR or to the Mafia—is really neutral. The revenue collection fell short of target, period.

Still, Salceda was ready to concede that this country was already taxed heavily. Maybe he was trying to say, although he failed to say it, that Congress could not pass any new taxes to cover for the shortfall. This cute administration therefore simply must collect more out of the existing taxes.

How do you do that? I know—by blaming the BIR. Instead of plugging the LEGAL loopholes! Which is the work of Congress!

But then again, we all know that the higher the taxes, as Salceda so eloquently pointed out, the more incentive for people to cheat in their payments.

In short, where are the tax reforms?

Anscor seen booking gain of ₱2.9B from sale of ICTSI stake

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING FIRM A.SORIANO CORP. (ANSCOR) expects to book a gain of P2.9 billion in the second quarter from the sale of its entire 23-percent stake in port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI).

In a quarterly financial report filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Anscor said net proceeds from the sale of its stake in ICTSI was worth P5.16 billion.

As a result, Anscor will book income of P2.89 billion from the divestment for the quarter ending June 30.

Anscor said that as a result of this gain, it would declare a special one-time cash dividend of P1.25 a share once it has received the proceeds from the sale on June 4.

The divestment will allow Anscor to share profits with shareholders and scout for other investment opportunities.

Anscor has veered away from port management after it unloaded its entire 23-percent stake in ICTSI to ICTSI chair Enrique Razon Jr.

Anscor, together with the Razon group, hold directly and indirectly 51 percent of ICTSI.

ICTSI and Phelps Dodge Philippines Energy Products Corp., which manufactures wire and cable products, account for the lion's share of revenues to Anscor.

Aside from these two firms, Anscor has interests in tourism, aviation, business process outsourcing, call center, nurse deployment, broadband services and real estate.

Anscor owns Seven Seas Resorts & Leisure Inc., which in turn owns the Amanpulo Resort. Amanpulo continues to be recognized annually since its opening in 1994 as one of the best beach resorts in the world.

It also has investments in E-Telecare International, the call center company spun off from SPI Technologies in 2003; in International Quality Manpower Services Inc. (IQMAN), a venture engaged in deployment of registered nurses to the United States, and in Multi-media Telephony Inc. (MTI), a provider of a full range of voice, short messaging and high-speed data services.

Its subsidiary, Anscor Land, oversees the group's real estate assets such as properties in Cebu and Puerto Princesa as well an investment in the Enterprise Center on Ayala Avenue. It also runs A. Soriano Air Corp., the operator of hangars used by Seven Seas Resorts and Ten Knots Group (El Nido Resorts).

Anscor's net income in the first quarter dipped 11 percent to P128.68 million from P144.56 million in the same quarter last year.

Department of Science and Technology
ADVANCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE
ASTI Bldg. Technology Park, C.P. Garcia Avenue
UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City Philippines
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INVITATION TO BID

The **ADVANCED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE (ASTI-DOST)** is inviting all bidders for the Internet Services for the following:

1. 1.024 Mbps Link from ASTI IC Node
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   To TELOF XI
   Address : Davao Medical Center Compound Corner Friendship Dumanlas Rd., Bajada, Davao City,
   Provide proposal for the following specification:
   Technology : DLL/IPVPN/DFR
   Bandwidth : 1.024 Mbps
   Facility : Copper and Radio
2. **Domestic Data Link from ASTI IC Node Luzon**: 2275 Chino Roces St., Makati City, **Visayas**: 3F Gt-IT Plaza, Asiatown IT Park, Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City, **Mindanao**: Davao City/Cagayan de Oro
   To : PCARRD's 14 Regional Consortia
   Provide proposal for the following specification:
   Technology : DLL/IPVPN/DFR
   Bandwidth : 512 Kbps, 768 Kbps, 1.024 Mbps, 2.048 Mbps
   Facility : Copper and Radio
   Note : Contract is for an initial 12 months subscription and is subject for an initial renewal for another 12 months.
3. **ADSL with Internet Services to 35 FITS Centers**
   Provide proposal for the following specifications:
   1. CIR 64 Kbps
   2. Bursible to at least 256 Kbps
   3. With at least 3 Static IP Addresses

   Note :
   1. Contract is for an initial 12 months subscription and is subject for an initial renewal for another 12 months
   2. DSL provider must provision dedicated peering with ASTI/PREGINET of at least 2 Mbps bandwith
4. **Wireless Internet Service, 22 units**

   Note : All proposal is inclusive of taxes, installation and other fees.

Pre-bidding Conference will be on June 06, 2006, 10:00 AM and Opening of Tender will be on June 19, 2006, 2:00 PM at ASTI Conference Room, ASTI Bldg., UP Technopark Complex, C.P. Garcia Avenue, UP Campus Diliman, Quezon City, Bidding Documents may be obtained from ASTI or call Ms. Neth Caser and Ms. Millet Pedro at Tel. Nos. 426-9766, 426-7423, and 426-9767 for more details.

In case of failure of biddings due to ineligible or non-compliant of participating and responsive bidders, re-bidding shall automatically be scheduled one week after the announcement of failed bid.

(Sgd.) JOSE ERIC S. MAGLANQUE
BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 23, 2006)

Bidding for N. Harbor backed

HARBOUR CENTRE Port Terminal Inc. of businessman Reghis Romero II has thrown its support behind the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (PCCI) call for the government to privatize immediately the Manila North Harbor through a public bidding.

PCCI had written a letter to the Philippine Ports Authority recommending that the privatization of Terminal 1 be done as soon as possible due to the need for transparent and competitive procedures.

PCCI also recommended for PPA to continue operating Terminal 2, while undertaking a thorough review of the need to modernize its operation for further privatization efforts.

PCCI said port users called on the PPA to allow the nearby Harbour Centre and the South Harbor to operate in competition with Terminals 1 and 2.

"We laud the stand of the PCCI on the privatization of North Harbor," HCPTI said in a statement.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 22, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.9	6.2	5.9	6.2	43,000
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	37	37	35.5	37	194,600
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	63.5	63.5	62.5	62.5	1,168,900
China Banking Corp.	900	900	895	895	4,610
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	300
Export And Ind. Bank A	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	2,720,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70	71	69	71	137,800
International Exch. Bank	40	40.5	40	40.5	83,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39	39.5	38.5	39	232,900
Philippine National Bank	35	35	34.5	34.5	5,000
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39.5	14,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17.25	33,800
Security Bank Corp.	52	52	51	52	274,400
Union Bank Of The Phil.	44	44.5	44	44.5	5,200
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1700	1700	1650	1650	200
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	630,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	200	200	200	200	700
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2090	2090	2090	2090	230
Ivantage Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.16	595,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	47	48	47	48	110,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	47	47.5	47	47	412,900
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	14.25	13.75	14.25	32,300
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	21.25	20.75	21	340,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	1,328,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.45	2,316,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	180,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	1	1	1	1	520,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	404,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	7,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	2,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36	35.5	35.5	230,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3	3.05	3	3	462,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	63.5	62.5	63.5	128,000
San Miguel Corp. B	80	81	79.5	81	179,100
Universal Robina Corp.	20.25	20.5	20	20.5	415,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	720,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Concrete Aggregates A	7	7	7	7	14,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	700,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.44	1.44	862,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	242,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.3	1.3	217,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.11	0.115	12,900,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	3	3	3	3	5,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	400,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	1,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	420	425	420	425	203,150
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.55	0.55	1,000,000
Abovitiz Equity Ventures	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	45,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	1,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.031	0.032	0.027	0.028	36,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	896,000
APC Group Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	220,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	18,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.95	880,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.3	1.36	321,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	5,399,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.05	4.05	3.95	4	764,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	155,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.2	3,666,000
Medco Holdings	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	500,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	20,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	1,900,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	1,300,000
SM Investments Corp.	230	232	228	229	152,390
South China Resources Inc.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.08	125,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.71	0.71	610,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.11	2,800,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.5	9,611,800
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.14	1,661,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.26	2.26	2.24	2.24	446,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	3,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	30,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.62	25,350,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.047	0.047	0.042	0.044	1,000,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.64	0.64	300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.42	1.44	5,181,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,200,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	16,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.24	1,100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	250,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.66	1.7	1.64	1.66	45,824,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.25	10,780,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	750,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11	11	11	11	24,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	260,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	4,000,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.1	1,470,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	16	15.5	15.5	20,100
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.24	3,675,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	920	940	915	915	109,620
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.7	3.9	3.65	3.85	9,237,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1985	2020	1985	2020	83,880
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	1,600,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	1,500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.88	1.9	1,178,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	600,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.0525	12,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	107,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.035	0.031	0.033	1,289,500,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	221,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.5	7,393,400
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.54	1.6	1.54	1.6	395,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.58	2,920,000
		EDUCATION			
Far Eastern University	1000	1000	1000	1000	990
iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	2.9	2.9	418,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.18	2.18	175,000
Paxys Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	355,600
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3.65	3.75	3.35	3.45	14,399,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.1	4.1	3.5	3.55	6,414,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	231,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.8	7.8	7.4	7.4	4,562,000
Benguet Corp. A	12	12.5	12	12.5	146,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.1	2.1	2	2	269,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.35	8,670,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.37	13,920,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	206,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	122,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.0095	0.01	0.0085	0.009	3,787,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.6	4.6	4.25	4.35	10,408,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.6	4.6	4.25	4.3	17,839,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	28	28	31,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.33	1,100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.69	0.69	0.58	0.59	2,460,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	372,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,600,000
THE PHILODRILL CORP. A	1.3	1.3	1.18	1.2	3,493,000
THE PHILODRILL CORP. B	1.3	1.3	1.18	1.18	2,000,000
PETROENERGY RES. CORP.	16.25	16.25	14.5	14.75	2,341,400
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref.) SERIES U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,900
PLDT (10% Pref) SERIES W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,600
PLDT 10% Pref SERIES AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,500

DISCLOSURES

MACONDRAY Plastics Inc. has disclosed the repurchase of 5,000 common shares at P3.00 per share on May 22.

***

PETRON Corp. has declared a cash dividend of P0.10 per share payable on June 29 for stockholders of record as of June 2.

***

GERONIMO Z. Velasco, Geronimo F. Velasco Jr., Henry Sy Sr., Ma. Paz V. Laperal and Jose Miguel Velasco have been elected as directors of **Republic Glass Holdings Corp.** Meanwhile, Bienvenido A. Tan Jr., Corazon S. De La Paz, Federico E. Puno and Adeline S. Lim were likewise elected as independent directors. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 22, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.782595	1.000000	52.6290
Japan	Yen	0.007007	0.008953	0.4712
United Kingdom	Pound	1.470966	1.879600	98.9215
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100911	0.128944	6.7862
Switzerland	Franc	0.643581	0.822368	43.2804
Canada	Dollar	0.699120	0.893336	47.0154
Singapore	Dollar	0.494188	0.631473	33.2338
Australia	Dollar	0.590682	0.754774	39.7230
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.076620	2.653505	139.6513
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208731	0.266716	14.0370
Brunei	Dollar	0.492632	0.629485	33.1292
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000109	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020493	0.026186	1.3781
UAE	Dirham	0.213101	0.272301	14.3309
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.277800	67.2493
Denmark	Kroner	0.134119	0.171377	9.0194
India	Rupee	0.017257	0.022051	1.1605
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216426	0.276549	14.5545
Mexico	New Peso	0.069922	0.089346	4.7022
New Zealand	Dollar	0.483411	0.617703	32.5091
South Africa	Rand	0.119639	0.152875	8.0457
Korea	Won	0.000827	0.001057	0.0556
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024529	0.031343	1.6496

BTr cancels auction of 25-year treasury bonds

National Treasurer says the government can afford to stay out of market for now

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY has canceled today's auction of 25-year treasury bonds on suspicion that the market would try to jack up interest rates for "absurd" reasons.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government preferred to stay out of the market than be forced to sell bonds at a high price.

The government's liquidity position is still very healthy anyway, and so it does not have to be forced to immediately raise cash, he said.

The government was supposed to borrow P3.5 billion through the auction of 25-year bonds today.

The cancellation of today's auction followed the decision of the BTr to reject all bids for 10-year bonds last week, when it was also supposed to raise P3.5 billion.

Had the Btr accepted bids raised in the auction last week, the interest rate for the four-year bonds would have risen to 8.41 percent, or 1. 41 percentage points higher than the 7 percent recorded during its last auction on April 25.

The market's move to seek higher premiums came amid perception that yields on government securities were already too low, resulting in a negative real interest rate.

Ideally, interest rates on government securities should be higher than the inflation rate to make sure the yields from the investment instruments were not offset by the increase in consumer prices.

The rate for the 91-day T-bill rate stood at 5 percent during its last week's auction, increasing slightly after hovering at the 4-percent level the previous weeks. Annual inflation, on the other hand, stood at 7.1 percent in April.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier agreed the interest rate on the 91-day T-bill was already too low and that it would be wise to increase interest rates a little.

The BSP said too low interest rates did not encourage savings and investments.

But Cruz said that while T-bill yields could rise a bit, there was no reason for the market to seek much higher interest rates on T-bonds because inflation was not expected to remain high in the next few years.

T-bonds are government securities that mature after more than one year.

He said that the Btr has the power to cancel auctions if the market would insist on getting high interest rates.

He said the scheduled auctions for T-bills and bonds for next week would push through for now, but added that the Treausry would decide on "a per week basis."

"We don't need the cash, so the government would stay out of the market until it becomes settled," Cruz added.

Earlier, the BTr announced that it would issue P104.5 billion worth of government securities in the third quarter of the year to finance the government's expenditure requirements.

But Cruz said the schedule would remain flexible.

CRUZ

Stocks close slightly higher

From page B1

sharply last week to where it was before the rally.

The composite index ended up 1.96 points at 2,357.98 after trading between 2,352.41 and 2,360.38, on volume of 6.39 billion shares worth P1.48 billion.

Losers outnumbered gainers 77 to 25, while 39 stocks were unchanged.

The broader all-shares index gained 1.20 points at 1,469.57.

"It is tempting for bargain-hunters to come out at this point. But we don't expect buying to turn aggressive right away," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc.

The prospect of further increases in US interest rates have prompted foreign fund managers to realign their portfolios in favor of more dollar-denominated assets, consequently weighing on the peso and prompting the interest rates on government securities to rise.

Dealers said this has also led to worries that local interest rates would eventually rise, in turn dampening domestic consumption and economic growth.

PLDT was top-traded, ending at P2,020. Rival Globe Telecom fell P5 to P915, erasing gains it had made earlier.

ICTSI advanced 25 centavos to P13.50 after it announced that it had purchased 95 percent of Indonesian port operator PT Makassar Terminal Services. *(See story on page B1.)*

Conglomerate Ayala Corp. gained P5 at P425 on bargain-hunting, while unit Ayala Land ended steady at P13.50.

Another of its unit, Bank of the Philippine Islands, was down a peso at P62.50.

San Miguel A-shares were steady at P63.50 while B-shares inched 50 centavos higher at P81.

AFP

INTERPHIL LABORATORIES, INC.
CANLUBANG INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BO. PITTLAND
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of the stockholders of INTERPHIL LABORATORIES, INC. will be held at the Grand Ballroom, The Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club, Inc., Southwoods Avenue, Carmona, Cavite on **June 14, 2006 at 3:00 P.M.**

The Agenda for the meeting shall be as follows:

1. Call to order;
2. Certification by the Corporate Secretary on the sending of notices and existence of a quorum;
3. Reading and approval of minutes of the last Annual Stockholders' Meeting;
4. Report of the President;
5. Approval of the Financial Statements for the calendar year ended December 31, 2005;
6. Ratification by a majority vote of the stockholders, of actions taken by the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation since the last annual meeting of the stockholders;
7. Election of Directors;
8. Appointment of External Auditor;
9. Transactions of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting;
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to be represented thereat, you may submit your proxy to the Corporate Secretary at the Third Floor, Zuellig Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, on or before June 7, 2006, together with a board resolution authorizing your represented, in case of corporate stockholders. Proxies received after June 7, 2006 shall not be recognized for the meeting.

Registration starts at 2:00 P.M. Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 are entitled to vote and be voted during the meeting. For your convenience in registering your attendance, please have available some form of identifications such as your Community Tax Certificate, Passport or Driver's License.

Canlubang Laguna, April 26, 2006.

ANA L. A. PERALTA
Corpocate Secretary

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More Classified Ads on pages A6, A15 & B2

60th APMA NAT'L CONFAB SET

THE AUXILIARY TO THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Apma) held its 60th Annual Convention with the theme 'Apma-Kaisa ng Pilipino sa Kalusugan,' May 19 at the Manila Pavilion Hotel, U.N. Avenue corner Orosa St., Manila. According to Apma national president Josefa A. de Jesus and Apma Auditor Loreta Y. Tee, over-all chair of the 60th annual convention, the affair featured a keynote speech by Lourdes Casas Quezon, governor of the Philippine National Red Cross, the awarding of the APMA Kabalikat Award (3rd conferment of award) to Francisco 'Kit' M. Morales, AVP-professional relations management Division of Unilab Inc, plenary session, 'Approaches to Global Cardio Vascular Disease Risk Reduction' with Dr. Anna de los Reyes-Javier as speaker, and annual business meeting and election of the board of directors and officers for 2006-2007.

Josefa A. de Jesus
APMA
National
President

Loreta Y. Tee
APMA Auditor
Overall Chair
60th Annual
Convention

OBITUARIES

Boldly she strode, fiercely she raged,
But dearly she loved,
And now has gone to benignant sleep

DRA. FLORA B. BAYAN

Distinguished Medical Scientist and Public Servant
Consultant, World Health Organization / Head, Population Program, Department of Health

Passed away peacefully on May 21, 2006 in the presence of her sister **LYDIA** and nieces **VICTORIA G. SALAS** and **CECILE P. AGUSTIN**, joining her beloved parents **SERGIO S. BAYAN** and **FELISA BORJA** and her sisters **AMPARO B. ZAMORA** and **CRISTINA B. DE LOS REYES.**

She is survived by her sister **LYDIA B. SALAS**; nephews **MANUEL B. ZAMORA, JR., RONALDO B. ZAMORA, SALVADOR B. ZAMORA, ANTONIO B. DE LOS REYES, ARTURO B. DE LOS REYES, JR., SERGIO B. DE LOS REYES** and **EMILIO B. SALAS**; nieces **MA. TERESA B. DE LOS REYES, MA. ELENA B. DE LOS REYES** and **MA. FLORA R. SANTOS**.

She cared for us all and we shall miss her deeply.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Nacional, 6 Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be tomorrow, Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City following the Mass of Resurrection at 8:00 AM.

We request our relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Our Dearly Beloved

GABRIEL I. NABOR

April 25, 1962 – May 20, 2006

Now peacefully rests in the infinite grace and goodness of the Lord at the age of 44.

His bereaved mother ADELA; siblings, Rev. Fr. Jerome Nabor , Mr. & Mrs. Benilde Revister, Mr. & Mrs. Teofila Kagels, Mr. & Mrs. Victorico Nabor and all other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Storta Chapel, Loyola Memorial, Sucat Road, Parañaque.

Funeral Mass at La Storta Chapel, Loyola Memorial at Sucat Road, Parañaque, May 23, 2006 at 8:00 p.m.

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heaven..."

Ecclesiastes 3:11

In Loving Memory
on the Fifteenth Death Anniversary of
GORGONIA MEDINA VITUG
of Arayat, Pampanga and Quezon City
who joined our Creator on May 24, 1991
Masses will be offered at the following churches
on May 24, 2006

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, *Kaulaon St., Q.C.*	6:30 AM
Sto. Domingo Church, *Quezon Avenue, Q.C.*	12:15 PM
Most Holy Redeemer Parish, *Brixton Hill, Q.C.*	6:30 PM

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

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People, Events & Products

Moviegoers 'lite-n up' with new Selecta Lite

SUMMERTIME HAS ALWAYS meant refreshing desserts and sweet treats - and now, it's also the time to enjoy a cool, health-friendly snack. Moviegoers got a taste of the new Selecta Lite ice cream recently, when Selecta brought this sumptuous new confection to malls and cinemas around Metro Manila.

Selecta Lite is the first brand to locally introduce "lite" ice cream in the three all-time favorite flavors: Double Dutch, Cookies and Cream, and Very Rocky Road. It has the rich ice cream flavor you've always loved, but it's 94 percent fat-free and with 35 percent less sugar. Each delectable serving has only 100 calories, so even fitness buffs can indulge without the guilt.

The full-flavored treat was certainly a hit among movie watchers who got to be among the first to try it. Hundreds lined up at Greenbelt 3, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-la and Eastwood City cinemas for the free scoops of Selecta Lite ice cream which came with their movie tickets.

This new dessert sensation earned enthusiastic approval from health buffs, ice cream lovers, kids and adults alike. "It still tastes delicious even though it's fat-free," says Jane, who tried Selecta Lite at the Glorietta 4 cinema. Beth, who sampled it at Greenbelt 3, agrees: "It still has that rich flavor I love, but now it's much healthier."

With its delightful taste and fitness-friendly ingredients, Selecta Lite can lite-n up all your family feasts, dessert indulgences, and special occasions. Watch out for this exciting new treat, coming your way this summer!

'SEEING THRU COLOR' RIBBON CUTTING

Shown is the 'Seeing Thru Color' Ribbon cutting at the exhibit opening of Rona Buenaseda-Chua at the Crucible Gallery, 4th level, SM Megamall A. In photo are Rona with her art students and works. For info, call 635-6061.

Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge

WITH A DARING CONFIDENCE, HYUNDAI ASIA Resources Inc (Hari), the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the country, brings you Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge, a series of organized test drive activities aimed to demonstrate the versatility, durability, handling, and power of the Hyundai CRDI line-up. Invented in 1997, the Common Rail Direct Injection (CRDI) engine has been known for its fuel efficiency. Now Hyundai believes that it is time to highlight not only the CRDI's fuel economy but also its fierce power and mechanical reliability on off-roads . Kicking off today, at Hyundai Balintawak, Hyundai Dares will see motoring journalists drive the Hyundai Getz, Hyundai Matrix, Hyundai Accent, Hyundai Tucson, and Hyundai Starex through the rough and rugged terrain of the Cordillera region, covering the cities and towns of Baguio, Sagada, Banaue, Tuguegarao, Pagudpud, and Vigan. During the opening ceremony, Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and COO of Hari, expressed her confidence that this daring exploit to the Cordilleras will encourage more motoring enthusiasts to witness, experience, and believe in the power of the Hyundai CRDI.

Analytic intelligence forum

SAS, THE LEADER IN BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE, is holding a forum on analytic intelligence, May 26, at The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City as part of the company's Executive Business Forum series. Entitled "Beyond Business Intelligence: Driving Performance and Innovation through Analytics", the event will tackle the importance of analytics as a competitive business strategy in providing insight to optimize current resources as well as foresight to identify new opportunities and maximize profits. The event talks about how analytics – beyond the query and reporting and OLAP traditionally associated with BI – can truly create value from data already present in companies' operational systems. For inquiries on SAS' analytic intelligence forum, please call SAS Philippines at (02) 633-6916.

Jollibee Express Delivery

NOW YOU CAN ENJOY YOUR FAVORITE YUM-burgers and Jolly Spaghetti with a serving of Jolly Fries on the side. Even satisfying your craving for a pick-me-upper Choco Sundae at the end of a tasty meal is easy, thanks to 8-7000 Jollibee Express Delivery. Because it's all about giving you complete and total satisfaction that's why it has come up with new and better technologies to give you quality service every single time. By ensuring the quality of its products and services, Jollibee lives up to its name as the number one fast food brand in the country. So when the need or the craving arises, go ahead and dial 8-7000 and you'll be sure to get "lang-hap-sarap" delights right when you need it.

Viauno launch

FINALLY, VIAUNO HAS ALREADY REACHED MANIla. What makes Viauno special? Viauno integrated its hi-tech materials and yet retained the choicest old shapes that allow an astonishing rise of craftworks' value in dresses and shoemaking that makes Brazil famous now for its being trendy and fashionable. Viauno puts value on premium quality of its products, without compromising the style and comfort. Viauno understands the pro active women of today, in their ever changing mood and taste, that's why Viauno comes out with new products every month. Women on the go who love natural and variety of frills in clothes could be in Sao Paolo, Oxford Street, Arab Emirates. May 24, at 5:30 p.m., is the launching of Viauno featuring its shoes, bags and accessories, with its first ever fashion show in the Philippines, at the Entertainment Mall of the SM Mall of Asia. After the fashion show will be the unveiling of Viauno's boutique, located at the second level of the Main Mall of the SM Mall of Asia. For further info, browse www.viauno.com.

My Wedding 2006

CREATE AN INTIMATE AND WELL CHERISHED wedding as C3 Events Place and R&A Events Specialist collaborate in staging a two-day bridal and fashion exhibit entitled "My Wedding 2006". A showcase of different wedding must-haves from gowns to accessories to wedding destinations and other nitty-gritty's of wedding preparation to the actual wedding date. This coming May 27 and 28, all couples-to-be are invited to be part of an intimate engagement of bliss, flair and fashion at C3 Events Place located at the heart of Greenhills commercial complex, #18 Missourri St., North Greenhills San Juan, Metro Manila. Exhibit opens 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. For further information you may call R&A Events Specialist at (02)437-0591,(02) 813-1029, (0916)-2773663 or visit www.myweddingnetwork.com and www.weddinglibrary.com.

Phil Robotics Olympiad

THE PHILIPPINE ROBOTICS OLYMPIAD (PRO), a science, technology and educational event which aims to offer an opportunity for students to expand their horizons through exploration of robots and robotic systems in schools announces the 5th Philippine Robotics Olympiad Launching Ceremonies, June 22, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Department of Education. The PRO is in partnership with the Science Education Institute - Department of Science and Technology and supported by the Department of Education. The launch of the Lego NXT Robot and Robotics demonstrations are the highlights of the PRO launch. An estimate of over 50 schools both private and public are expected to join the competition this year held annually at the Activity Center, Alabang Town Center on Sept. 21 and 22 (Preliminaries) and Oct. 6 (Finals). Representatives from winning schools will comprise the Philippine Robotics Team to represent the country at the World Robotics Olympiad 2006 to be held in Nanling City , People's Republic of China on Nov. 3 to 6. The PRO is made possible by Felta Multi-Media Inc, Mc Kester's, SM Foundation, Energizer , Alabang Town Center and A-Z Direct Marketing. For more details, call Coni Inocencio at 912-1397 or 438-1756 or e-mail fetia@info.com.ph.

BITS Clips

MetroClub golf tournament

THE METROCLUB:PHILTOWN-TOBY'S CLASSIC will be held on May 24 at the Philippine Navy Golf Club. This 18-hole competition shall be participated by golfing-members of MetroClub and their dependents including executives of Philtown, selected guests, and prospective owners of The Metropolitan Tower. Tee-off time is between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Biggest call center confab

THE CALL CENTER CONFERENCE & EXPO 2006 offers delegates the opportunity to attend the country's premier learning event for the contact center industry at early bird's rates before May 31. The conference is a two-day must-attend event to be held this June 20 and 21, at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. This event is organized by Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP). Those interested in attending may avail of the early bird's rate of P4,000 for the One-Day Pass, a 20 percent discount from the full rate of P5,000, and a discounted P6,400 for the Two-Day Pass, a 20 percent discount from the full rate of P8,000. Call centers that are members of CCAP can enjoy additional discounts, with only P3,000 for the One-Day Pass and P4,800 for the Two-Day Pass. The early-bird's rate is only up to May 31. To register and pay, participants can call the CCAP Secretariat Office at telephone nos. 886-4407, 844-8341 and 889-7763. Look for Leah Serrano.

Persistent eyesores at EAMC

AFTER THE GOVERNMENT DISMANTLED A ROW of tiangge and food stalls from the facade of East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City a few weeks ago on account of their unsightly appearance, four of these food stalls continue to remain, rendering the same disparaging image to its environs. Clustered at the back of the main building leading to the Cooperative Canteen and conspicuous with their canvass roofings, these food stalls turned "cafeterias" allegedly operate even without the required health permits and health certificates. All these, just when the EAMC is currently undergoing a facelift, in line with the national government's "Medical Tourism" thrust where the EAMC is being eyed as being at the forefront. Purportedly, some insiders appear to allow the existence of these stalls even without the express knowledge of Dr. Roland Cortez, MD, who is EAMC's current medical chief.

Think tank paints rosy picture for RP business

Economist cites improvements in tax administration, LGU practices

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BUSINESS SECTOR MAY EXPECT A rosy future as opportunities appear to abound following the improvement in the country's fiscal picture, as well as effective promotion of enterprises, and the conduct of good local government practices, according to a former chief economist.

Cielito F. Habito, who held the position during the Ramos administration, said that while economic indicators—including growth of production, the performance of the peso against other currencies, and volume of export and imports—have shown improvement although these were not as good as those of strong performers.

Habito, who heads the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development, was speaking at the opening of the two-day 27th National Conference of Employers held at the Manila Hotel.

Citing data from the National Statistics Office, Habito said that in 2005 the gross domestic product increased by 5.7 percent, exports grew by 2.3 percent, and imports increased by 1.8 percent.

Also, the peso—which is catching up with other currencies with the help of a "dramatic slowdown" in imports, weakening of the American dollar, the seasonal increase in remittances and a global excess supply of money—is seen to remain strong throughout the year at an average of P52.31 and P51.97 against the dollar, ACERD said.

While the numbers posed the question of a glass of water either being half-empty or half-full, the data still provided a firm base for businesses to grow, Habito said.

He said opportunities stem from the government's improved tax administration capability, the expansion of the value-added tax's coverage as well as its rate increase, good practices among local government units, as well as improved collaboration between the national government and LGUs, and working partnerships in social services between government, non-government and other agencies.

Habito said that while indicators that matter most to people were on the downside—which translates to continued poverty for a significant number of Filipinos—there were still more who are not considered poor and who have the means to help those who are so.

Statistics tell us that one out of four Filipino families is poor, but this also means that three out of four are not, Habito said.

BSP not willing to waive P193-M Prudential fine

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS IS UNwilling to waive a P193-million monetary penalty slapped on Prudential Bank, which has been absorbed by the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

According to BSP sources privy to recent discussions at the Monetary Board, the banking regulator is bent on running after the liabilities of any bank taken over by another bank.

The penalty on Prudential Bank, which used to be owned by the Santos family until BPI acquired the controlling stake, was "reserve-related," the BSP sources said.

In August last year, BPI bought about 91.5 percent of the Santos family's Prudential Bank through block purchases at the PSE worth P5.6 billion, comprising some 7.52 million shares priced at P746.44 per share.

Before the takeover, Prudential Bank was a mid-size commercial bank with about P60 billion in assets, a network of 187 branches and 52 automatic teller machines nationwide.

The BSP earlier waived the fines imposed on banks that were acquired by other banks to encourage mergers in the banking system.

But recently, requests for incentives—such as those granted to BDO for its purchase of the local branch network of the United Overseas Bank of the Philippines—are now being deliberated at length during MB meetings, the sources said.

Mango growers expect long, hard haul to the top

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—GROW AND EAT more mangoes.

This was the appeal of more than a hundred mango growers who gathered here from May 17 to 19 for the 8th National Mango Congress.

Mangoes in the Philippines are said to be one of the best in the world and taste like no other. Even the processed forms—dried cheeks and strips, chunks, juices and purees—are superior. The country ranks as one of the top 10 suppliers of mangoes in the world today.

But mangoes, even if they are in season, are beyond the reach of many Filipinos.

Rodel Maghirang of the Bureau of Plant Industry, one of the congress speakers, said mangoes have *"presyong pangregalo at pang-okasyon* (prices fit for special occasions)," while the processed ones are *"presyong turista* (priced for tourists)."

ACCORDING to producers, mango has to "go West," where markets are expanding. At present, the country produces close to 1 million metric tons of mangoes a year. But total exports only reach 4 to 5 percent of gross production.

Exports

The country produces close to 1 million metric tons of mangoes yearly. But total exports only reach 4 to 5 percent of gross production or 36,000 metric tons.

Based on the 2003 study conducted by Food Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), Filipinos eat only an average of 11 kilograms of mangoes every year or 30 grams daily.

This means that of the 879 grams of food taken daily, only 53 grams or 6.1 percent of these are fruits.

Maghirang recommends that Filipinos should eat more fruits to stay healthy and choose mangoes over imported fruits.

Mango is the fourth among the top high value crops in the country after bananas, pineapple and coffee.

In 2005, mango production is valued at P16.75 billion. Unlike banana production that posted 11 percent last year, mangoes have a modest growth of 1.85 percent.

The country has 160,000 hectares planted to mangoes, up from only 87,000 hectares in 1996. But fruit and mango juice production has been slowing and dipping, a trend that worries mango watchers because global markets are expanding and other mango-growing countries are catching up.

Go West

As a high value crop, mangoes do not grow on trees without inputs like fertilizer, flower inducing sprays, pest control and post harvest facilities.

Add to these is the layer of middlemen from wholesalers and retailers, to transporters.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), it is cheaper to produce mangoes in Luzon than anywhere else in the country.

The cost of production in Luzon is only P3 to 5 a kilo. But in the Visayas and Mindanao, it is P6 to P10 and P8 to P10 a kilo respectively.

The farmgate price of mangoes is P15 a kilo, but when it reaches retailers and supermarkets, it is P30 to P40 a kilo.

Mango has to "go West," Maghirang said. "Mango markets are expanding in the United States and European Union countries."

The US market is growing fast, with 40 percent demand increase and the Philippine mangoes, which are grown all year round, can fill in the demand during lean season of mangoes in Mexico, the major supplier of mangoes to the US.

Only Guimaras mangoes, however, are allowed in the US after the province has been certified free of mango pulp and seed weevil, which are quarantine pests in the US.

Brazil is the top supplier of mangoes in Europe. Prospects are good in European markets if the Philippines can improve transportation and storage.

Exotic

In Europe, mango is a "special," if not exotic, fruit.

The Philippines is the largest supplier of mangoes to Japan, which is also the biggest importer of mangoes in Asia. But Mexico, Thailand and Australia also supply to Japan, and they may outpace the Philippines.

Overall, the Philippines ranks second to Mexico as the top exporter of fresh mangoes to the world. But the Philippines' share of the market is only 9 percent, while Mexico has 38.8 percent.

Maghirang said the mango road map envisions that the Philippines may be the leading exporter of mangoes in the world by 2020.

Meanwhile, it has to overcome some weaknesses, like the dominance of backyard farms that may be a problem in quality control, the erratic and relatively low yield, short shelf life, and high freight cost, among others.

The country also has to worry about strong competition from imported fruits, trade protectionism and unmet demands during off-season.

Gov't to promote micro insurance for low earners

THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING A blueprint for the proposed "micro-insurance" program, under which it intends to help insurers aggressively sell products to the untapped "C" and "D" markets and promote insurance awareness among Filipinos.

Evangeline Escobillo, head of the Insurance Commission, said the blueprint is expected to be completed before the end of the year. The commission hopes to roll off the micro-insurance program by early 2007.

Escobillo stressed the need to increase public awareness of the importance of being insured, noting that only 12 to 13 percent of the country's population are currently covered by insurance.

The commission intends to increase the figure to 20 percent by the end of 2007, and to 40 percent by 2010, she said.

Escobillo said one strategy to market insurance products to low-income earners would be tapping the services of cooperatives, which could distribute insurance products to its members. Cooperatives would be an ideal channel to promote insurance in the countryside, she added.

Quoting figures from the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Escobillo said there are 71,000 cooperatives in the country, and 29,000 of these are actively operating and could help in the marketing of insurance products in the countryside.

Michelle V. Remo

Firms may no longer get to enjoy tax perks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT IS POISED to lift the income tax holiday (ITH) granted to priority businesses, saying that the fiscal incentive does not necessarily help increase the amount of investments, while it only tends to result in huge foregone revenues.

The Senate committee on ways and means, chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto, yesterday expressed its intention to include the proposal of removing the ITH in the fiscal incentives rationalization bill, which is currently under deliberation at the upper chamber.

The Senate committee's intention was made known following the release of the study commissioned by the Department of Finance (DOF) showing that ITH, compared with other fiscal incentives, has the least influence on the entry of investments in the country.

The DOF said that the ITH grant on businesses had been an impractical way of enticing investments. It added it would soon push for its immediate removal in the fiscal incentives rationalization bill.

Data from the DOF showed that the government lost P27.14 billion in potential tax revenues in 2004 alone due to the ITH grant on firms registered with the Board of Investments.

BOI-registered firms are those belonging to the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP), a list of priority industries and are therefore granted various fiscal incentives.

Despite the huge foregone revenue from the ITH, Recide said, investments made were actually influenced by other factors, such as the country's huge domestic market. He concluded therefore that there was a high redundancy rate in the granting of ITH to businesses.

He said fiscal incentives in the form of "net operating loss carryover" (nolco) and "accelerated depreciation" were better in terms of attracting more investments.

With nolco, firms that post a loss in a given year are allowed to deduct the amount of loss to its tax liabilities in the following year. With "accelerated depreciation," firms may deduct the amount of depreciation of its capital equipment earlier than its time of actual depreciation.

Recide added that the quality of investments attracted by ITH is of poorer quality than those enticed through "nolco" and "appreciated depreciation."

Companies that invest because of ITH are usually the ones that stay only temporarily and leave once the ITH is lifted, he said. Those that invest here because of the "nolco" and "appreciated depreciation" are usually the ones that stay in the country for the long term, he added.

The Department of Trade and Industry, head agency of the BOI which is tasked with investment promotion, said it was supporting the proposal to lift the ITH.

SMC, Ayala Land, SM seek direct power link

By Abigail L. Ho

FORTY-FIVE BULK POWER users, including San Miguel Corp., Ayala Land Inc. and SM Supermalls, have filed applications to be directly connected to the National Power Corp.

According to the state firm's marketing and commercial relations department, the 45 industrial and commercial power users that applied for direct connection had an estimated requirement of 214,660 kilowatts (kW).

The demand of San Miguel alone was placed at 19,000 kW for its food processing plant in Mandaue City, Cebu, plus another 3,000 kW for its recycling plant in Mindanao.

Ayala Land is seeking 15,000 kW for its Laguna Technopark development, while SM requires a total of 5,500 kW for its malls in General Santos and Ozamis City.

Of the 45 applicants for direct connection, Napocor said 19 were located in Luzon, eight were based in the Visayas, and 18 were from Mindanao.

These applicants come from various sectors and industries, including mining, electronics, steel manufacturing, and food manufacturing. There were also applicants that operate economic zones, industrial estates and universities. Some represent local government offices.

These companies wanted direct connection to ensure the reliability of the supply of electricity. They currently get their electricity supply from either private electricity distribution utilities or rural electric cooperatives.

Other commercial and industrial bulk power users that wanted to be directly connected to Napocor include the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone in Baguio City and Ammex Corp. in Benguet, both with a demand of 20,000 kW; Samsung Electro Mechanics in Calamba, Laguna, with 10,630 kW; Climax Arimco Mining Corp. in Nueva Vizcaya with 15,000 kW; and Crew Minerals Inc. and Platinum Metals Corp., both located in Mindanao and with a requirement of 10,000 kW each.

In a related development, Napocor energized six new customers last year, including Global Steelworks International Inc. in Suarez, Iligan City; the Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp.'s Bacon-Manito and Palinpinon facilities; People's Energy Services Inc. in Camarines Sur; Leyte Industrial Development Estate Management Corp. in Isabel, Leyte; Treasure Steelworks Corp. in Nunucan, Iligan City; and Purity Ice Plant and Cold Storage Inc. in Labo, Camarines Norte.

Napocor said these new customers raked in an additional P270 million for the state firm last year.

ICTSI buys Indonesian port operator

From page B1

According to ICTSI, Makassar is the principal port in Eastern Indonesia. Last year, it reported cargo throughput of 239,522 container TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

"ICTSI considers Makassar as a young container port with a big potential for growth," ICTSI said. "This company looks forward to participating in more projects in Indonesia."

MTS has a cooperation agreement with PT Pelabuhan Indonesia IV for the procurement, installation and operation of container loading and unloading equipment under a revenue-sharing scheme at the Makassar Port Container Terminal.

ICTSI's Singaporean unit purchased the shares in MTS from Portek Systems & Equipment Pte Ltd. and PT Pelayaran Nusantara Meratus.

"The latter company, an Indonesian shipping line, retained 5 percent of its holdings in [MTS]," the statement said.

Earlier, ICTSI chair and president Enrique K. Razon Jr. said that lower trading volumes between local businesses and foreign counterparts were hurting ICTSI's revenues, giving its management fresh impetus to diversify operations internationally.

He said that container volumes for inbound and outbound goods have been noticeably lower in the first few months of the year.

Given its small size, ICTSI's new Indonesian acquisition is not expected to make an impact on the company's bottom line in 2006 and possibly in 2007.

ICTSI reported a consolidated net income of P1.3 billion in 2005, representing a 17-percent increase from its 2004 profits, "distinguished by growing returns from its established overseas operations, further expansion, and increased operating leverage across the group."

Despite the increasing importance of its foreign operations, however, ICTSI's Manila International Container Terminal (MICT) remained its top business concern.

Peso dips . . .

From page B1

you look at the fundamentals, they have remained essentially the same," Tetangco said.

He cited the country's sustained balance-of-payments surplus for this year, the growth in the domestic economy, the better-than-expected fiscal performance by the government and rebounding export earnings.

As of the last Monetary Board meeting early this month, Tetangco said the expectation was that the US Fed would raise its overnight rates by another quarter-percentage point and pause after that.

"The market is saying there will be another move. Maybe. Of course, the market can't be 100-percent sure. Now we'll see what's going to happen and wait for further signals," Tetangco said.

Amex said whether the US Fed would raise its rate again in June was now a very "close call" but noted it was expecting a pause over the summer.

BUSINESS

Crude oil prices rise toward $69/barrel

Market traders point to concerns about Iran, Nigeria

SINGAPORE—CRUDE OIL prices yesterday rebounded slightly from the previous session's decline, as traders bought contracts amid some expectation the market may have bottomed out as well as persistent concerns about oil supplies from Iran and Nigeria.

Light, sweet crude for June delivery, which expires later Monday, rose 16 cents to $68.69 a barrel in Asian electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange, midmorning in Singapore.

The contract on Friday fell 92 cents to settle at $68.53 a barrel. The July contract rose 6 cents to $69.35 a barrel.

Gasoline futures gained 0.16 cent to $2.04 a gallon (3.8 liters) while heating oil futures added 1.09 cents to $1.9310 a gallon. Natural gas prices advanced 5.3 cents to $6.015 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Oil prices fell in the previous session by a general sell-off in the commodities market, sparked by a rise in the US dollar after several days of declines, and worries over rising US inflation.

"The market may be bottoming out," said Victor Shum, energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

"At least in some quarters of the market, there's a feeling that the downward price correction over the last week to below $70 provides a buying opportunity," he said.

Shum added that the oil market continued to show more upside than downside potential, based on geopolitical worries.

"Because of the overall tightness in refining capacity and crude oil production capacity worldwide, just one actual or perceived event could cause a spike in prices," he said.

Traders have been concerned about how the West's standoff with Iran over the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions will affect that nation's oil exports, as well as supply disruptions in Nigeria and the Gulf of Mexico during hurricane season.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Sunday the US has not offered a guarantee against attacking or undermining Iran's hard-line government in exchange for having Tehran curtail its nuclear program.

"Iran is a troublemaker in the international system, a central banker of terrorism. Security assurances are not on the table," Rice said.

The European Union said last week it would propose economic and political incentives to persuade Iran to halt its plans for enriching uranium.

While Iranian officials contend they are only seeking nuclear power, the US and other nations fear Iran is working toward developing weapons. *AP*

Wal-Mart sells Korea outlets for $882M

SEOUL—WAL-MART STORES Inc. has agreed to the sale of its South Korean outlets to local retailer Shinsegae Co. Ltd. for $882 million, making it the second global retailer to exit the country in a month.

Both companies said in a statement on Monday they had agreed to the South Korean retailer buying a 100 percent stake in the US company's 16 domestic outlets for 825 billion won.

Shinsegae will operate the stores under its E-Mart retail store brand.

French retail giant Carrefour sold in late April its 32 South Korean stores to a local fashion retailer E-Land Ltd. in a $1.85 billion deal to focus on China.

Carrefour sold out of the country's discount store market so that it could concentrate resources on China's $240 billion retail industry, Asia's largest retail market after Japan.

"As we continue to focus our efforts where we can have the greatest impact on our growth strategy, it became increasingly clear that in South Korea's current environment it would be difficult for us to reach the scale we desired," Mike Duke, vice chair of Wal-Mart, said in a statement.

Shinsegae is South Korea's biggest discount store chain operator, with 79 E-Mart stores nationwide. It lost out in the bid for Carrefour's South Korean stores.

Analysts say the purchase will give Shinsegae a firm lead over its rivals. Shinsegae competes with Lotte Shopping Co. and Britain's Tesco Plc. in the discount store market in South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest economy. *Reuters*

Sumitomo Metal plans refinery expansion

SHANGHAI—SUMITOMO METAL Mining Co. Ltd. plans to expand annual capacity at its Niihama nickel refinery in Japan by 10,000 tons by the end of the decade to accommodate increased output from a Philippines project, an executive said.

The Coral Bay nickel project, which began production a year ago, will double output to help feed Asia's growing demand for nickel, which is used in stainless steel, nuclear plants and oil rigs.

Sumitomo's current capacity for production of electrolytic nickel is 36,000 tons a annum.

"The Coral Bay expansion will probably start up by 2009, so we see the Niihama expansion by 2010," Kamiya said at a conference on stainless steel organized by trade publication Metal Bulletin.

Sumitomo said earlier it would invest $285 million to build a second plant at the Coral Bay nickel refinery in the Philippines, doubling output to 20,000 tons a year. The new plant, on the western island of Palawan, is due to start up in April 2009.

Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., with 10 percent, is the Philippine partner in the project. Stakes in the new facility may be adjusted.

Coral Bay Nickel started commercial production of nickel and cobalt in April 2005. *Reuters*

EADS grows 57% in Asia

EUROPEAN AERONAUTIC DEFENSE and Space Company EADS, a global leader in aerospace, defense and related services, has recorded dramatic growth in its operations in the Asia Pacific region.

In 2005, EADS generated a 57-percent increase in revenues versus 2004 figures. EADS generated E7.7 billion (23 percent of global group revenues) in Asia Pacific compared to revenues of E4.9 billion (15.5 percent of global) in 2004.

The company expects that 30 percent of its overall revenues will come from Asia Pacific by 2015. The overall revenues of EADS in 2005 grew by 8 percent to E34.2 billion.

In 2005, the Asia Pacific region accounted for 40.2 billion (43 percent) of the EADS order intake. The order intake of the group more than doubled to E92.6 billion over the previous year.

"EADS has a long track record of cooperation with Asian countries, which are becoming major players in the world of aerospace, defence and security", said Jean-Paul Gut, chief operating officer for marketing, strategy and global development of EADS.

COMBO of two file pictures shows a logo of Euronext in Sept. 22, 2000, in front of the Palais Brongniart in Paris during a ceremony (top) and signs inside the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on March 8, 2006, on the first day of trading of the NYSE Group Inc. in New York (bottom). AFP

NYSE unveils $21-B plan to merge with Euronext

PARIS—THE NEW YORK STOCK EXchange unveiled a share and cash bid for Euronext on Monday, countering a proposed rival offer from Deutsche Boerse just a day before a meeting where Euronext shareholders will decide on the future of the five-country European exchange.

The proposed alliance would create a transatlantic exchange giant with a market capitalization of $21 billion.

NYSE Group Inc. said it saw cost and revenue synergies of $375 million, with group headquarters in New York.

Euronext said in a statement, its board would meet on Monday afternoon to consider the two proposals.

Under the NYSE plan, NYSE Group Chief Executive John Thain would become the new entity's chief executive, with Euronext chair Jan-Michiel Hessels becoming its chair.

Euronext Chief Executive Jean-Francois Theodore would become deputy chief executive officer.

Under terms of the proposal, each share of NYSE Group will be converted into one share of common stock of the combined company, which will be renamed NYSE Euronext, NYSE said in a statement.

Holders of Euronext ordinary shares will be offered the right to exchange each of their shares for 0.98 shares of NYSE Euronext stock and 21.32 euros ($27.18) in cash.

The transaction is based on a fixed ratio of 1.4 shares of the combined company for each Euronext ordinary share, with 30 percent of the aggregate consideration paid in cash.

The operator of the Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels and Lisbon bourses, and of London's Euronext.liffe derivatives exchange, had on Friday rebuffed a Deutsche Boerse offer as "nothing new."

The Paris-based operator and its German rival have been in talks for months but these discussions have stumbled on crucial issues such as the business model of the merged entity and the neutrality of its headquarters. *Reuters*

Tokyo up, but Asia still wary about inflation

SINGAPORE—JAPANESE STOCKS INCHED higher on Monday, with blue-chip shares tracking gains in US stocks, but US inflation worries continued to weigh on the broader Asian market.

Japan's Nikkei share average, which has fallen for two straight weeks, was up around 0.5 percent. In contrast, shares elsewhere in Asia measured by MSCI were down about 0.6 percent.

Susumu Abe, manager at Mito information and investment department in Japan, said bargain hunters had lifted the Tokyo market.

"Investors are buying a slew of undervalued issues, after seeing the Nikkei's resilience after falling briefly below 16,000," he said.

The Nikkei hit a two-month closing low of 16,087.18 last Thursday, having lost a total 1,204 points since May 8.

Shares were also up a touch in Taiwan and Singapore, but down approaching 1 percent in Seoul, Hong Kong and Australia.

US stocks rose on Friday, ending a volatile week as gains in tech firms offset a slide in shares of some commodity-related stocks. The Nasdaq Composite Index rose 0.62 percent, while the Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.14 percent.

This week will be "interesting because we've really now put most of the earnings season behind us," said Brock Ganeles, head of equities at Merriman Curhan Ford & Co. in the United States. "It's easier for macroeconomic factors to impact stocks even more because you're not hearing from companies as much."

Traders said the dollar was firm as investors bought the currency back, having sold it heavily over the past couple of weeks, when it hit an eight-month low against the yen and a year-low versus the euro.

"The dollar is likely to be firm this week as investors take a respite from the past weeks' rapid selling and adjust their positions," said a dealer at a Japanese bank.

"Market focus is returning to the future course of US interest rates. And whether the dollar keeps its gains will depend on whether we see strong data," he said.

The United States is due to report housing, consumer sentiment and revised first-quarter GDP growth figures this week.

Gold lost some appeal as a rising dollar made the precious metal more expensive in other currencies.

Spot gold hit a high of $661.25 an ounce before retreating to $653.70, down from $659.20/660.00 late in the US market.

Gold fell to a three-week low of $651 on Friday.

Oil prices steadied after shedding almost 5 percent last week as investors, spooked by inflation concerns, locked in profits on a broad range of commodities.

Japanese government bond prices rose, tracking a short-covering rally in longer-dated US Treasuries and European bonds. The yield on the benchmark 10-year bond sank to a three-week low, reversing a rise which had taken it to nearly a seven-year high earlier in the month. *Reuters*

KDDI Corp's new Walkman brand music phone (right) and water and impact resistant phone are displayed at an unveiling in Tokyo. KDDI, Japan's second-largest telco, said it plans to launch the music phone, developed by Sony Ericsson, in Japan in June for about 20,000 yen ($179). REUTERS

Walkman phones launched in Japan

TOKYO—JAPANESE WIRELESS carrier KDDI Corp. said on Monday it will launch a Walkman brand music phone made by Sony Ericsson in Japan in June, its latest move to attract users in an industry facing tougher competition, sending its shares higher.

Competition in Japan's $78 billion cell phone industry, led by NTT DoCoMo Inc., is set to heat up as a new regulation this autumn makes it easier for customers to switch services by letting them keep their existing phone numbers, prompting operators to enhance their phones and services.

NTT DoCoMo also announced this month that it would launch a music download service later this year.

KDDI, whose main mobile phone brand, au, has enjoyed strong demand in recent years thanks to its innovative music download service, said the phone, W42S, would sell for about 20,000 yen ($179) and have 1 gigabyte of music-dedicated memory, allowing it to store up to 630 songs.

The phone, developed by Sony Ericsson, a mobile phone joint venture between Japan's Sony Corp. and Sweden's Ericsson , would also have a playback time of about 30 hours.

"More than 5.5 million Walkman phones have sold worldwide since their launch last August. Music phones virtually mean Walkman phones," Sony Ericsson Corporate Vice President Hirokazu Ishizuka told a news conference.

"They will finally come to Japan." Besides the Walkman phone, KDDI unveiled six other new models for the summer sales season, made by Casio Computer Co. Ltd., Toshiba Corp., Sanyo Electric Co. Ltd., Hitachi Ltd. and Kyocera Corp..

"Mobile number portability will be under way by November and users will become more choosy in picking their favorite phones," said Tohru Kawai, general manager of KDDI's au business sector.

The news comes on the heels of KDDI's announcement last week that Japan's second-largest telecoms operator had agreed with Google Inc., the world's most popular Web search provider, to offer Google's search engine on its cell phones. *Reuters*

POWER up your brain /C3

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Life is about losses and gains

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, life is all about losing and gaining, giving and taking—a constant check and balance of having and not having.

Here is a rundown of some of the day-to-day life situations where this natural law applies.

Losing...

Weight. It comes easily to some, and with great effort to others. You know you need to lose it when you're having difficulty zipping up your pants or skirt. Tips to remember:

- Before starting a diet, consult your physician. If your doctor doesn't understand your needs, see a nutritionist.
- Beware of diet fads. They may rob you of major nutrients.
- It's okay to have one glass of wine because it stimulates gastric juices and helps in proper digestion.
- Remember that when you're dieting, the body burns fewer calories due to decreased food intake. This is the body's natural response. Understand that diets never work unless accompanied by exercise. Visit a gym thrice weekly or walk briskly for 30 minutes daily.
- Diet fallacies include:

Gelatin dessert is not fattening.

Grapefruit makes you lose weight.

Fruits do not have calories.

High-protein foods do not have calories.

Steak is not as fattening as potato.

- Do not watch television while having your meals. You tend to eat more.

Focus. The inability to concentrate can happen for many reasons. When this is unmanaged, high negative stress levels are indicated. Triggers include: lack of sound sleep, unstable blood-sugar levels, anxiety/depression, stress, menopause, premenstrual disorders, attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Some remedies:

- Aromatherapy—inhale a drop of peppermint, lemon, rosemary or grape-fruit oil.
- Homeopathy—lycopodium or mix vomica can ease symptoms.
- Nutrition—gingko biloba 50 mg, 3x daily, zinc, 7.6-15 mg daily; increase intake of beans, nuts, lentils, fish, meat, oysters.
- Meditation—mind rest is a must in order to recharge it (15-20 minutes of meditation regularly in the morning and before retiring is recommended).
- Counseling—it will not hurt to see a therapist should your anxiety levels increase.

There are psychological ways to solve a problem.

Heart. To lose the zest for life or, worse, the will to live can happen to many of us at some point in our lives. Knowing that you have a family history of depression can be one reason. Alan Mellow, MD, PhD, assistant professor of psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, says, "There is well-documented evidence that, like cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure, major depression has a genetic development."

But even if you can't choose your parents, you can still do something about your propensity for depression. The best would be to seek counseling.

There is a physical price even for mild sadness. Just one to two days can weaken your immune system, make you appear 30 years older, decrease muscle tone and make your muscles sag.

- To counter this, you must acknowledge the bad feeling. Let them flow into and through you and out of your system.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Stay busy and active. Also, exercise!
- Seek professional help or find supportive friends/family.
- Stay away from alcohol/drugs.
- Keep your credit cards out of reach—the tendency is to splurge.
- Be a fine actress—act happy for a few hours until you cover the entire day. Then take it one day at a time.

If you feel you have lost your heart with no hope of retrieving it, have faith that you will love again.

Natural remedies

- Do not take tea, coffee or cocoa before bedtime. Stop by 4 p.m. These stimulants may keep you awake.
- Homeopathy: lachesis—this may reduce your anxiety about your inability to have a restful sleep.
- Aromatherapy—add a drop of lavender, *ylang-ylang* (chamomile or frankincense are not allowed in your lamp or burner if you are pregnant).

Gaining

- When you are able to meet your health goals, then you are gaining control over your cravings, whims and caprices.
- You gain in mind power when your focus is clear and centered.
- Your animo to live and love for life is heightened when you know you have a purpose for living.

Coco zest

Pamper yourself with a stimulating scrub. Use leftovers of shredded coco meat that have been squeezed dry of its milk. Apply as a scrub from feet to neck. Great skin smoothener.

Love and light!

References: "Age Erasers For Women," Prevention Magazine; "Natural Health For Women" by Beth Maceoin.

USA Vitamin Sale!

- **Glutathione Skin Whitener**. 500mg. P37.
- Spirulina. 500mg: P5. • Mangosteen. P9.
- Silymarin: P9. Glutathione Precursor: P11.

Available: Herbs for high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, impotence, cancer, UTI, arthritis, BPH

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EQ Dry Disposable Baby Diapers

TRAVEL BUDDIES

Get a FREE EQ Travel Buddy bag when you buy any EQ Dry Pack!

PROMO PERIOD: MARCH 18 - JULY 18, 2006

MECHANICS:

I. Consumers may join by simply collecting packs with intact proof of purchase (POINTS) found on the packs of EQ Dry Baby Diapers. Points per packaging are as follows:

EQ DRY BABY DIAPER with cloth-like cover PACKAGING	LABEL POINTS
Mini Pack (4s)	1/4 point
Travel Pack (NB22s, S20s, M18s, L16s, XL14s)	1 point
Econo Pack (S40s, M36s, L32s, XL28s)	2 points
Jumbo Pack (S60s, M54s, L48s, XL42s)	3 points

II. Submit the required EQ Dry Baby Diaper wrappers together with the following information: sender's name, complete address where you want the premium item/s delivered, baby's name and age, telephone and/or cellphone numbers, signature of parent/guardian, and the desired premium item, written on a piece of paper and enclosed in an envelope. For hard-to-find locations, it would be best that landmark information of the address given be provided for easy reference.

III. Entries can be mailed or hand carried to:
"EQ Dry Travel Buddies" JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. 31st Floor, Raffles Corporate Center Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
OR
"EQ Dry Travel Buddies" P.O. Box 14280 Pasig City

IV. Choose from any of the following collectible baby bag designs with the required EQ Dry Baby Diaper label points:

Premium Items	Points
Baby Travel Bags: (available designs) A. Pink and blue color combination B. Green and yellow color combination	10 points each
Animal Face Bags: (available designs) C. Cow D. Bear E. Penguin F. Dog	8 points each

IMPORTANT:
- Only packs of EQ Dry with cloth-like cover (plain or white) will be accepted.
- Entries containing cut-out points will not be honored.

V. The chosen premium item/s shall be delivered by LIBCAP Express to the address submitted by the consumer. In the event that the entry sender is not present during the time of delivery, a member of the sender's household may be asked to sign a proof of delivery and receive the premium item/s in behalf of the entry sender.

VI. Delivery lead times for the premium items are as follows (commencing upon receipt of "delivery orders" by the courier):
a. Metro Manila: within 2 to 3 days
b. Luzon & Visayas: within 2 to 4 days
c. Mindanao: within 3 to 5 days

VII. Premium items will be delivered until 60 days from end of promo period.

VIII. Consumers may join as many times as they want.

IX. Prizes are non-convertible to cash.

X. Entries thru mail are qualified 15 days after the promo period.

For more Information, please visit www.jsunitrade.com

Happy Baby, Happy Mommy

LIBCAP SUPER EXPRESS

Per DTI - NCR Permit # 0813 Series of 2006

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2-year	10.50%	P9,984
3-year	11.00%	P10,322
5-year	11.25%	P10,493
10-year	**11.50%**	**P10,665**

* Rates apply only for new term loan releases and purpose is acquisition, construction or refinancing. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

** For every loan amount of P1,000,000 for 20 years.

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CCA, Manila, the Philippines' pioneer in formal culinary education, continuously leads the way in the food service industry by giving you practical, hands-on education, equipping you with the much needed skills to excel in the global culinary arena.

Not only will you graduate highly competent and passionate with your craft, we'll make sure you'll bring fresh and young ideas as you face and rock the world.

Enrollment is on going for June and August intakes:
Diploma in Culinary Arts and Management (2 years)
Diploma in Baking-Pastry Arts and Management (2 years)

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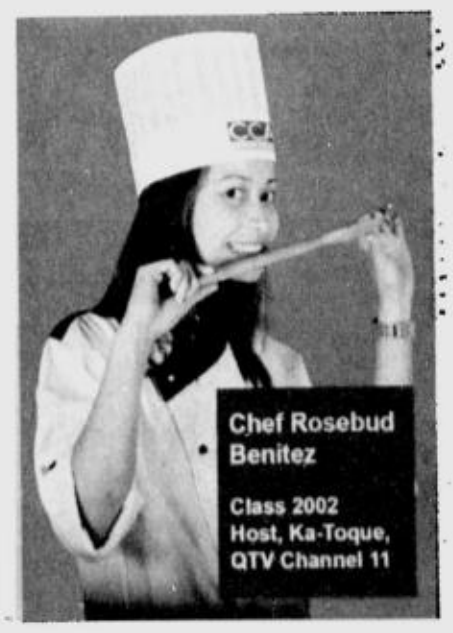
Certificate in Baking and Pastry Arts (1 year)

Enhance your diploma and earn a degree through our local and international partner schools:
Miriam College, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (Canada), Blue Mountains Hotel School (Australia), Johnson and Wales University (USA), and Les Roches School of Hotel Management (Switzerland).

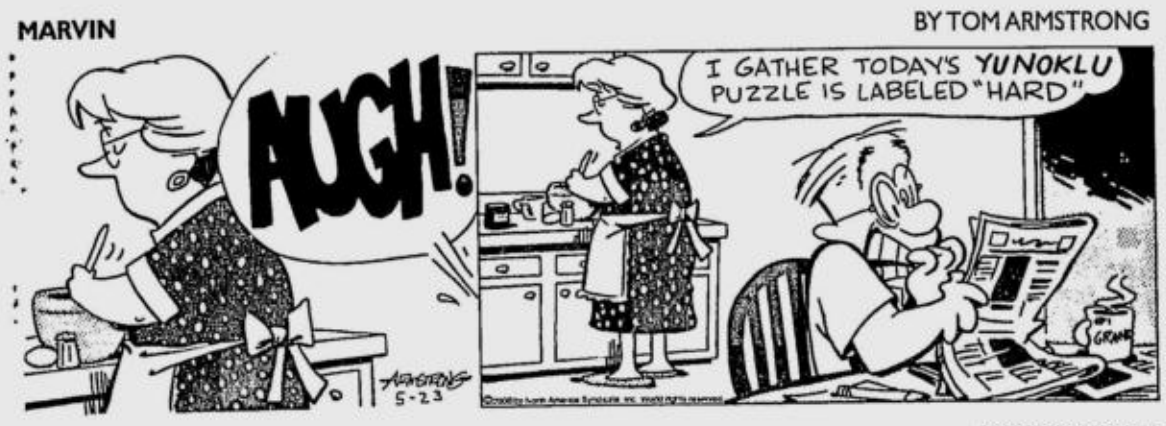
Scholarships available for deserving applicants.



FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND

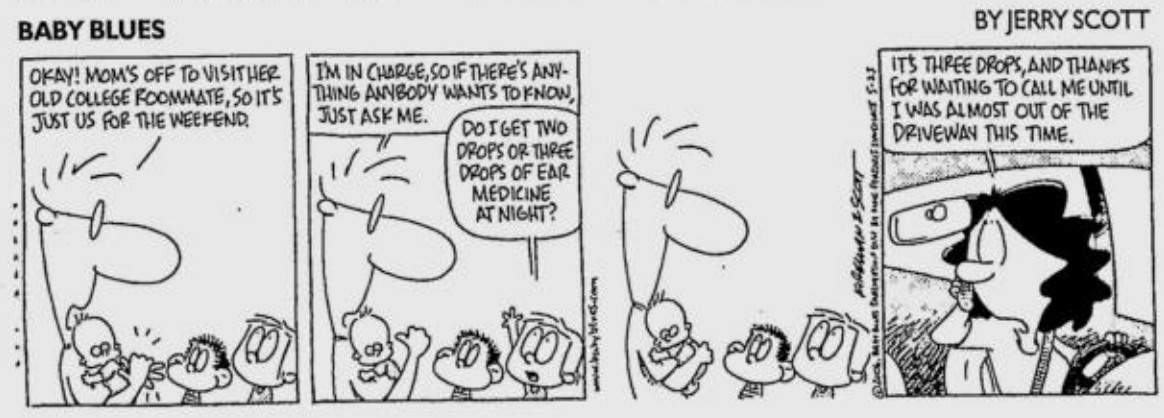
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG



PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT



MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: People find you attractive. You make a positive first impression. Because your energy is strong, you make a colorful statement. You're scientific and artistic. Many of you are excellent parents. You're physically active and good with your hands. Around age 30, your love of home and family life increases. Greater solitude this year will help you learn something important to your growth.
Birthdate of: Jewel, singer/songwriter; Marvin Hagler, boxer; Joan Collins, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with family members today. Don't make a big deal about annoyances. Just reserve the right to agree to disagree. (It's called survival.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You know the saying: You can please all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot please all of the people all of the time. Just accept this today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't take it personally if a friend ignores you or is not warm and forthcoming. The vibes out there are a bit tricky today. Relationships everywhere are strained!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is not an ideal day to try to get permission for anything from your boss. It's also a poor day to make a proposal to authority figures. People are not in the mood to say yes.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Travel plans and matters related to publishing, the law and medicine might be stalled in the water today. Fear not; things will work out later this week.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a poor day to ask anyone for anything. Don't apply for a loan, scholarship or bursary. Don't ask to borrow things. People feel territorial and tight-fisted.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might be physically attracted to someone today. However, this could be a relationship that has more than its share of arguments and discord. Tread carefully.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Co-workers are not willing to compromise today. This is definitely discouraging. Just work with what you've got. (You have no other choice.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel passionately attracted to someone today. (This might surprise you.) It's probably just a passing infatuation. It stems from your own feelings of frustration with others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be patient with family members today. If you're patient with your loved ones, they will be patient with you. That's how it works.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Avoid arguments with others today, especially with siblings and relatives. It's just not worth it. By Thursday, everything is hunky dory. (Have patience.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be careful how you spend money today. Don't buy something impulsively if you have any doubt at all. "When things get tough, the tough go shopping" is the motto off an emotional spender.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 NaCl
5 Burlesque bits
10 Toasty
14 Nabisco treat
15 Like 20 Questions questions
16 Hautboy
17 Cosby character meets actor/director?
20 Refrain
21 Balms
22 Earth model
25 Great honor
26 Major mix-up
30 Country of fjords
32 Heathens
34 Compass dir.
35 Poppa pig
39 Everyman meets actor?
42 Time in prison
43 Bout outcome, in brief
44 Eucalyptus eaters
45 Slacken
48 Wear away
49 Sour-tasting, old-style
52 Window leak
54 Highland gals
56 Fee for instruction
61 Hood's pal meets actor?
64 Length x width
65 Didn't stop
66 Release
67 South American cape
68 Pretentious
69 Midterm or final

DOWN
1 Nap locale
2 Riyadh resident
3 Okay, why not?
4 Perfectly
5 Actress Thorndike
6 Enamored of
7 Neighbor of Leb.
8 Letters that bang
9 Mournful sounds
10 Tiger moth caterpillar
11 From the beginning: Lat.
12 Weatherman Al
13 Unkempt
18 __ Beach, CA
19 Hindu music form
23 Good day, Yves
24 Rubik's first name
26 Tiff
27 Basilica section
28 Maturing agent
29 Brown arms and neck
31 Half a fortnight
33 Some NCOs
36 Capital of 30A
37 Fancified sch.
38 Loom up
40 Scraped (by)
41 Type of license or justice
46 Genesis casualty
47 Feeling of pity
49 Arabic word for God
50 Nile city
51 Organic compound
53 Causing laughter
55 Evening in Bologna
57 Plump president
58 Memo heading
59 Poems of praise
60 Turndown from Putin
62 Glass container
63 Ottawa's prov.

By Patrick Blindauer
Astoria, NY
5/23/06

Monday's Puzzle Solved

R	A	S	P	■	C	H	A	R	■	M	O	L	T	S
I	D	E	A	■	L	U	N	A	■	E	D	I	E	S
D	O	W	N	F	O	R	T	H	E	C	O	U	N	T
■	■	■	■	I	S	L	E	■	V	C	R	■	■	■
S	E	T	T	L	E	S	■	C	O	A	S	T	A	L
A	V	A	I	L	S	■	A	U	K	S	■	E	R	E
M	A	P	L	E	■	E	L	S	E	■	S	E	G	O
■	S	I	T	T	I	N	G	P	R	E	T	T	Y	■
B	I	O	S	■	T	E	A	S	■	N	A	I	L	S
R	O	C	■	A	C	M	E	■	C	R	I	M	E	A
A	N	A	R	C	H	Y	■	F	A	I	R	E	S	T
■	■	■	A	C	E	■	D	I	S	C	■	■	■	■
D	N	O	N	E	S	H	I	G	H	H	O	H	S	E
D	O	R	I	S	■	A	C	H	E	■	F	O	O	L
D	R	E	S	S	■	W	E	T	S	■	F	E	L	L

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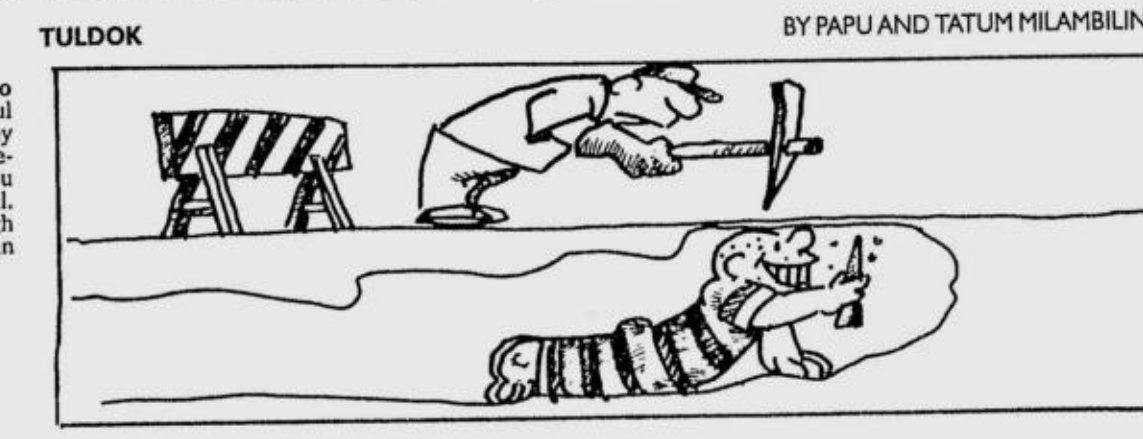
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



PITOY Moreno and Daisy Payumo. Standing: Ethel Timbol and *moi*

THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE: hostesses of my fun afternoon birthday party are Fortune Ledesma, Agnes Huibonhoa, Nini Licaros, Nene Leonor and Fe Rodriguez. Standing: Karen Macasaet, Mellie Ablaza, *moi*, Chit Salud and May Neri

GERMAN movie star Michael Von Trzebiatowski, Becky Garcia, Che Singson and Ana Ledesma

TERERET Liboro, Carrie Bautista and Mabel Abaño

ARLENE Arce and Susan Laudico

EMILY Lopez and Therese Santos

Another milestone for everyone's 'palangga'

NENA del Rosario, Criselda Lontok and Berna Lomotan

BETSY Tenchavez and Celine Bautista

ARTURO Luz

BABY de Jesus, Gilda Salonga and Tessie Kabigting

WITH A PEACEFUL CHILL-OUT afternoon and a more-than-generous *merienda cena* at the sprawling well-manicured Manila Golf Club in Makati, everything was set for my memorable birthday celebration.

The affair was slightly more glamorous than one would expect from a simple get-together of friends, *palanggas*.

Ultra-glamorous consul **Mellie Ablaza** welcomed the invitees with a short speech: "Indeed, Maurice has been a pillar in social circles with his indefatigable style and class. Maurice has kept many friends over the years who share a deep trust in and loyalty to him after many moons of social hobnobbing. In fact, this celebration of Maurice's birthday is an affair hosted by none other than his most treasured friends."

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Over 80 friends attended. The credit for this intimate afternoon affair went to the super nice and generous hostesses, like my fairy "godsisters" **May Neri, Nene Leonor, Nini Licaros,** Consul Mellie Ablaza, Consul **Fortune Ledesma, Fe Rodriguez, Karen Macasaet, Chit Salud** and Consul **Agnes Huibonhoa.** It was through their gracious efforts that *moi* got a memorable birthday treat.

"Happy Birthday, *palangga*," they chorused as *moi* blew the candles to mark another beautiful year of my life. Thank God.

'5+4 = 9'

For the Sancar pallet event, *palanggas*, the product was showcased not in a warehouse or on a truck or container van. A fun, fun cocktail bash was held at The Palm Beach Seafood Restaurant, The Fort, where Messe & Handel Corp. celebrated its "5+4 = 9th Year Anniversary."

The company acknowledged, thanked and paid tribute to business partners, supporters, suppliers and ever loyal employees.

In his opening speech, the hot, hot managing director, smart **Michael L. Cotinting** said, "After nine years, it is indeed an honor and a privilege for us at Messe & Handel to be considered as the leading pallet rental company and pooling service provider in the industry."

A major highlight of the event, *palanggas*, was the launch of the new model Sancar EC-25 and the "Extra Washed."

Management rah-rah team drew the lucky winners for tons of prizes. And the winners were **Robert Pearce** of IDS Logistics, who got a three-day, two-night trip to Boracay for two, and **Tess Izon** from Colgate Palmolive, who bagged a cool three-day, two-night trip for two to Hong Kong, no less.

RESTY Vergara, Evie Costa, Cory Quirino and Bobby Novenario

LULU Castañeda and Ruby Tuason

MONETTE Guevara and Nini Valdez

REGIE Gamboa, sales and marketing manager, Messe & Handel Corp.; Michael Cotinting, managing director, Messe & Handel Corp.; Ithiel Avendano, Nestlé Phils. Inc.; Ram de los Reyes, operations manager, Messe & Handel Corp.; Jesus Motoomull, DTI-BPS; and Norma Hernandez, DTI-BPS

CLARENCE Chan, Messe & Handel, San Miguel-CKAG Group; Enoe Gapusan, Nina Cansanay, Ogie Flores, Dang Flores and Popoy Ignacio

TESSIE Amparo, Tessie Luz, Chit Gohu, Alice Briones and Letty Syquia

PITANG Tiongson, Chloe Periquet, Lucille Villanueva and Nini Layug

MICHAEL Cotinting with the IDS Logistics team: Normand Ga; JR Tayag; Ferdinand Lim; Noel Bautista; Bobby Andes and Robert Pearce

Food for thought

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

AT A CONFERENCE ON AGING, PROMINENT neuroanatomist Marion Diamond gave five basic factors for the "successful aging" of the brain. Diet is first and most important, then regular exercise, mental challenge, new pursuits and human bonding.

Here is what current research suggests as good and bad for your brain.

Smart and dumb fat

Fat may have become a bad word but you wouldn't have much of a brain without it. Nerve cells are covered with a membrane made from fatty acids.

The most important fat for a healthy brain is omega-3 fatty acid, particularly DHA (the most abundant fat in the brain).

Researchers think omega-3 may stimulate nerve cells to produce more BDNF, a protein that protects and promotes nerve cell growth. Regular aerobic exercise does the same thing.

Fish is truly brain food. Fatty cold-water fish like tuna, salmon, mackerel and sardines are abundant sources of omega-3. Eating three ounces or 100 grams of fatty fish twice a week will supply the brain with needed omega-3. Small amounts of the fatty acid are found in walnuts, flaxseed, seaweed and green leafy vegetables.

Though Omega-6 from vegetable oil is needed for brain health, too much of it can be bad. The ratio between omega-3 and omega-6 should be 1:1.

The worst possible type of fat for the brain is trans-fat from partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. This is found in processed food like cookies, doughnuts, crackers, and snack items like chips and French fries.

A French study found that a diet high in trans-fat could change the way electrical impulses (translation: thoughts) are conducted. Scientists also believe that trans-fat weakens the structure of nerve cells, lowering resistance to stress.

Dumb and dumber

A high-fat and high-sugar diet is a "dumb and dumber diet." Lab mice fed a diet of 39 percent fat (lard and corn oil) and 40 percent refined sugar had lower amounts of BDNF, a protein that protects and promotes nerve cell growth, than those fed a healthy diet. They performed significantly poorly in maze tests.

Brain researchers Robert Friedland and Grace Petot told WebMD.com that both high-fat and extremely low-fat diet were bad for the brain. They found that people with the Alzheimer's gene, who had a high-fat diet in their 40s were seven times more likely to develop the problem in their 70s than those who didn't have the gene.

But those who ate a moderate-fat diet (25-30 percent) reduced their risk by four and a half times.

Brainy carbs

Though glucose, the brain's fuel is made from carbohydrates, not just any type of carbohydrate will do. High-fiber carbs from whole grains are best. They slowly release energy and do not raise blood sugar levels sharply.

It has been found that a rush of glucose from eating refined carbs or sugary food slows down thinking.

To keep the brain's glucose supply steady, eat breakfast and a mid-afternoon snack of whole grains, protein, and high fiber fruits and vegetables. Skipping breakfast or eating a breakfast high in refined sugar and flour leads to poor performance.

Bright rainbow

Eating the colors of the fruit and vegetable rainbow can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia, according to a new study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. People who eat the most antioxidants have 70 percent less risk of the two conditions. The study recommends eight to nine servings (half a cup = one serving) daily for optimum brain protection.

Friedland and Petot added that a meat-rich diet left little room for the minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables.

Spice up your mind

Curcurmin, the substance that gives the yellow color to curry made with the spice turmeric, has been found to have brain-protective qualities. According to Science News Online, mice bred to develop Alzheimer's were less susceptible when given a diet equivalent to the amount of curry a person in India typically eats each day. Researchers half-jokingly suggest that fish curry may just turn out to be the best dish for your brain.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Note: International Life Coach consultant Peter Hawe will talk on "Coaching for Success in Work & Life" June 16-17. Log on to www.diamondcoaching.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing back leg lift

TIGHTENS AND FIRMS THE buttocks and hamstrings (the back of the legs)

Equipment:

For greater resistance, use ankle weights or tie a rubber band above your knees (easier) or around your ankles (harder).

Exercise technique:

1. Take your right leg behind and lean forward from the hips while maintaining a straight back. Your arms are lifted in front for balance.

2. Contract your buttocks and move your leg straight back as far as possible without arching your lower back. Keep your abdominal muscles tight throughout the entire exercise. Make sure to keep the supporting knee slightly bent.

3. Return slowly to starting position.

4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Switch to the other leg.

5. Optional: Before switching to the other side, hold the leg in the lifted position and do 10 short quick pulses.

Performance tips:

1. If you want a greater range of motion, lean forward some more. This way you can lift the leg higher and get a greater contraction in the buttocks and hamstrings without having to hurt your spine by overarching it.

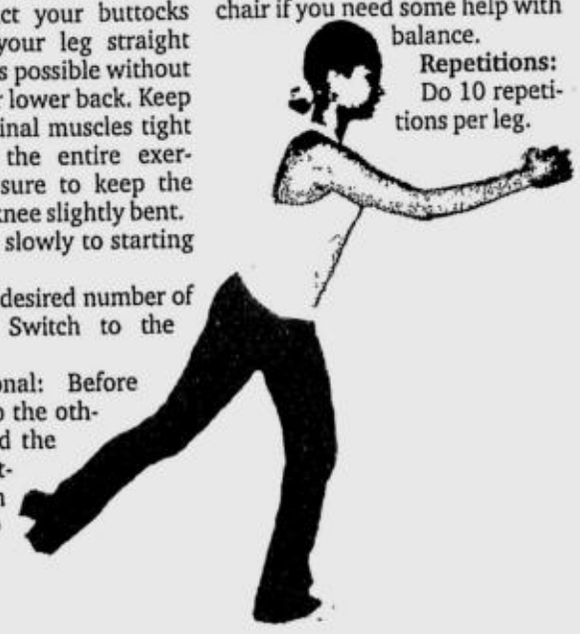
2. Always focus on contracting the buttocks first before lifting the leg backward.

3. Keep the supporting leg slightly bent.

4. Hold the back of a sturdy chair if you need some help with balance.

Repetitions:

Do 10 repetitions per leg.



Unknown Judas revealed

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Part I

NEW AND HITHERTO UNKNOWN information has been received by Dr. Aurelio A. Aquiatan Jr. from the spirit called Gabbey about the recently released translation of the Gospel of Judas discovered in the 1970s near Minya, Egypt.

Jun Aquiatan, a professor of business administration in a university in Pangasinan, has been receiving important spiritual messages through automatic writing since 1995 from an entity that calls himself Gabbey.

Although Gabbey never identified himself, we suspect he is Archangel Gabriel because he communicates with Aquiatan only on Mondays and has profound knowledge of the spirit world.

In previous messages I wrote about in my book, "More Encounters with the Unknown," Gabbey revealed the connection between the seven psychic centers or chakras (which he referred to as the seven power stations) and the Seven Sacraments, the Seven Last Words of Jesus, the 10 Commandments of God and the seven virtues.

It's been quite a while since we heard from Jun Aquiatan and Gabbey. When the translation of the Gospel of Judas was released by National Geographic Society in April, my former assistant, Frances Gloria, asked Jun if there was anything Gabbey had to say about this controversial manuscript. Gabbey's reply reveals information not found anywhere else and also confirms others already known before.

But let us review what is currently known about the Gospel of Judas before talking about Gabbey's new revelations.

Coptic

The Gospel of Judas is based on a manuscript found in the '70s and brought to light recently by nine scholars commissioned by National Geographic. The manuscript, which made its way to the National Geographic team after a circuitous path of sales, counter sales and alleged pilfering, is written in Coptic, the language of the early Egyptian Christians.

It was radio-carbon dated between 220 and 340 AD. Scholars believe it is a translation of an earlier Greek text probably dated between 130 and 180 AD.

Catholic Bishop Ireneus of Lyon, France, referred to the Gospel of Judas in his diatribe against heretics in the year 180 AD. So we know there really was such a gospel. We also know there were many other gospels circulating at that time, aside from the four gospels of Luke, Mark, Mathew and John, the only ones officially chosen and approved by the Catholic Church.

The choice was by no means unanimous. More than 100 bishops disagreed with the official stand and they were quickly banished by Emperor Constantine who convened the Council of Nicea in the year 325 AD precisely to define what Christians should believe.

No villain

In the newly revealed gospel, Judas Iscariot does not appear to be the villain and the betrayer he has always been portrayed in Christian teachings. On the contrary, he seems to be the hero who helped fulfill Christ's mission by delivering him to his enemies.

Judas also appears to be the only apostle who truly understood Christ more than any other apostle. That's why Jesus chose him for that important task. Jesus also revealed to Judas secret teachings about the universe that were not given to the other disciples.

In this regard, Judas shared with Mary Magdalene the unique privilege of being the only recipients of secret knowledge from Jesus Christ. Why Judas was specially chosen to deliver Christ to his enemies was revealed in the message from Gabbey to Jun Aquiatan on April 17 which would be discussed later.

According to a news report by John Allen Jr. from Rome, "In the roughly 3,000-word text, of which large chunks are missing or indecipherable, Judas emerges as a hero. Jesus says Judas 'will exceed all of them who are baptized,' because Judas 'will sacrifice the man that clothes me,' a reference to the Gnostic belief that the body is a mere set of clothes, and the essence of the person is the immortal soul."

What does the Gospel of Judas say about Jesus and his teachings? The website of National Geographic provides some glimpses. In Codex page 37, Jesus is shown to be laughing quite a lot. He is not at all the serious and reserved person portrayed in the official version of the Catholic Church.

Laughing Christ

"In the Gospel of Judas," says National Geographic, "Jesus laughs quite a lot, particularly at the absurdities that dictate the rules of human life. But he also laughs at how seriously—and without question—the disciples take such things as prayer, offering it not because they want to but because they believe that their God really expects to be praised in such a way."

Why would the son of God laugh at these things? "Because the Gospel of Judas is a Gnostic gospel, an early form of spirituality that focuses on gnosis, the Greek word for 'knowledge.' Gnostics believe in mystical knowledge, a knowledge of God that allows them to be one with him and to communicate directly with him without an intermediary. Such beliefs were in direct conflict with members of the emerging orthodox church," which became a monolithic religious organization in the 4th century.

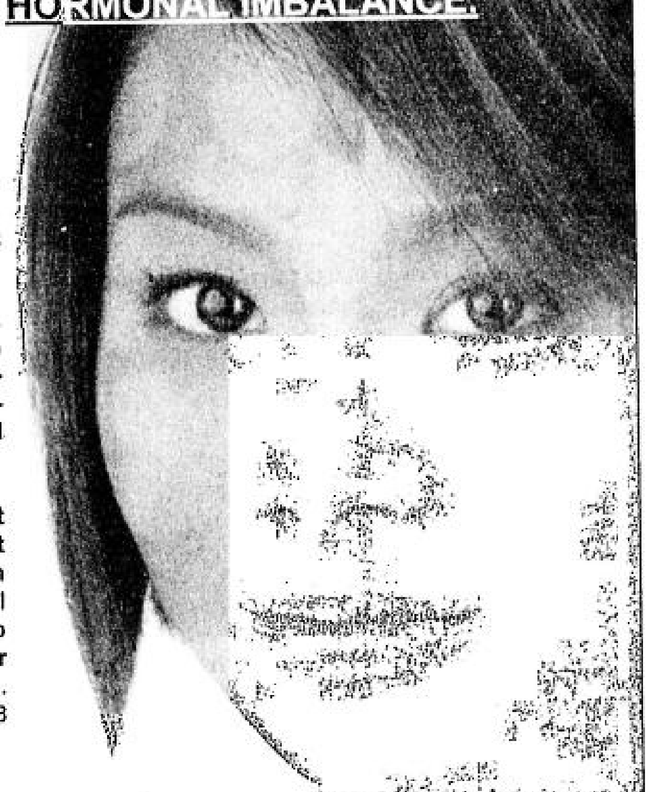
The Gnostics were persecuted by the dominant orthodox church and their teachings condemned as heretical, their books burned and destroyed.

In Codex page 37 of the Gospel of Judas, "Jesus seems to be criticizing those who preach in his name but whose proclamations lack substance or fruitful content."

To be continued.

Next week: New Revelations on the Gospel of Judas

IF ASTRINGENTS, ANTIBIOTICS OR RETINOIDS DO NOT SOLVE YOUR ACNE PROBLEMS...IT MAY BE CAUSED BY HORMONAL IMBALANCE.



If women with acne do not respond to or have developed resistance to cleansers, benzoyl peroxide antibio- tics and retinoids, they can benefit with the use of Hormonal Therapy.

Hormonal Therapy is an excellent option for women, in combination with oral antibiotics or with topical retinoids, with or without topical anti- microbials.

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Join the FACIAL SKIN HEALTH CONVENTION on JUNE 24, 1-5 PM at Astoria Plaza, Ortigas Buss. District, Pasig City. There will be presentations on the causes of acne, its treatment options, and facial skin care. Free skin analysis by a dermatologist will also be provided to early registrants. Guest speakers: Ms. Olen Lim, dermatologist Dr. Claudia Samonte and, OB Gynecologist Dr. Sylvia Santos. ENTRANCE IS FREE! Register by sending us an email at ealimmktg@mymail.ph.inter.net Please give your name, age, contact no. and profession. Limited seats available.

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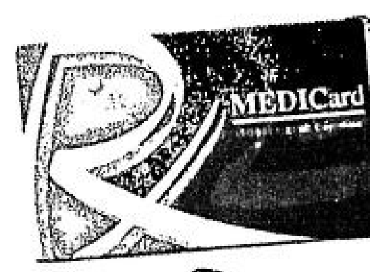

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is an epithelial malignant tumor of the cervix uteri. In the Philippines, it is the most common genital tract tumor and ranks 4th in incidence among the leading cancers*. Risks factors are first coitus at young age, multiple sexual partners or partners with multiple sexual partners, non-practice of Pap smear, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases or STD's (HPV, HSV) and lower socio-economic status. The most frequent early symptom is bloody discharge, usually postcoital bleeding. Symptoms of advance disease are backache, hematuria, leg pain or leg edema. To prevent its occurence, a monogamous sexual lifestyle should be practiced, delay in first sexual activity and treat STD's promptly. Public education campaign is stressed and most importantly, sexually active females should undergo annual Pap smears.

*Philippine Handbook of Clinical Oncology, 2nd Ed.,Chapter 16 p.145

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our three-year medical service provider from San Fernando, Pampanga. Dr. Evelyn Briones-Manlutac specializes in OB-Gynecology. She finished her degree in medicine at Angeles University Foundation, College of Medicine. She later took her specialization training for OB-Gynecology in 1997. Dra. Manlutac is a fellow and diplomate of the Philippine Obstetrical & Gynecological Society, an active member of the Philippine Medical Association and Pampanga Medical Society. She is currently the training officer of the Department of OB-Gynecology at Jose B. Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Medical Center, Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 12noon and at Mother Teresa of Calcutta Medical Center, Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, from 8am to 10am.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1** - 12:05 PM, 2:30, 4:55, 7:20, 9:45
Cinema 3* - 12:50 PM, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30
Cinema 6 - 11:20 AM, 1:45 PM, 4:10, 6:35, 9:00

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 12:25 PM, 2:45, 5:05, 9:45
Cinema 2* - 1:35 PM, 3:55, 6:15, 10:55

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:20 PM, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 3:20 PM, 5:40, 8:50

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:00 NN, 2:10 PM, 4:20, 6:30, 8:50, 10:50
Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20

MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1 - 12:00 NN, 2:25 PM, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40
Cinema 5 - 11:30 AM, 1:55 PM, 4:20, 6:45, 9:10

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 1:05 PM, 2:55, 5:05, 9:45

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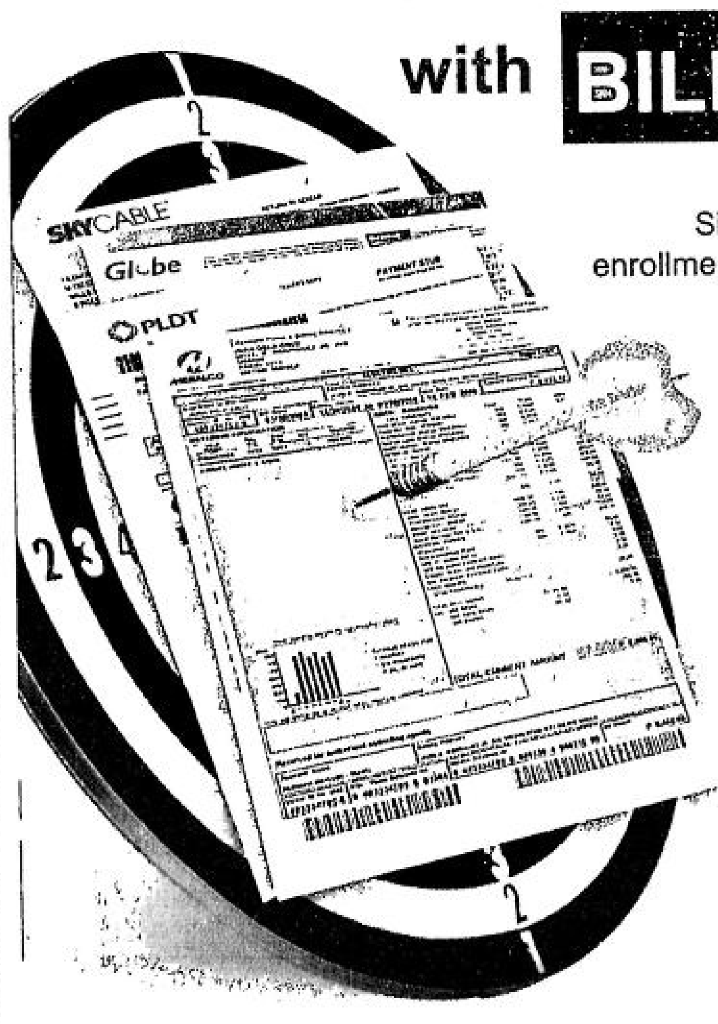

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